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DEAD SPACE 3 HITMAN TEKKEN



PLAY



ISSUE NO 219
THE FUTURE IS NOW

SECRETS REVEALED
BLACK OPS II
TREVARCH'S BIGGEST
EVER INTERVIEW

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

METAL GEAR RISING

REVENGEANCE

HUGE GAMEPLAY REPORT «
BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACCESS «
"WE HAD TO PUSH RESET" «

KRATOS KILLS DRAKE

HANDS-ON WITH SONY'S
EXPLOSIVE EXCLUSIVE

EVERY
SECRET INSIDE
**ASSASSIN'S
CREED III**

What Ubisoft kept
hidden from everyone

**50 HARDEST
TROPHIES**
How many have you unlocked?

OVER 800 REVIEWS INSIDE:

MAX PAYNE 3 GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER SORCERY DIRT: SHOWDOWN
RESISTANCE: BURNING SKIES GRAVITY RUSH MORTAL KOMBAT VITA

**HUGE INTERVIEW
THE NEW GTA**

Sleeping Dogs takes the
fight to Rockstar

TRUTH REVEALED

**BATMAN:
ARKHAM WORLD?**

Why Rocksteady had to kill The Joker





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The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine



06 **WORLD FIRST** **METAL GEAR RISING** **REVENGEANCE**

Kojima Productions and Platinum take us behind the scenes

Got questions?



What's the deal with *Metal Gear Rising*? Is it a Platinum game? Is it a stealth game? How does it work? What

even is it? What does 'Revengeance' mean? Is it a proper word? What is love? Baby don't hurt me.

There have been nothing but questions as an unusual air of mystery descended upon *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* after Platinum Games swooped in to save the ill-fated Kojima Productions project. Now, thanks to our unrivalled access and interviews with four members of the team, we have the first answers to everything you've ever asked! Except for what 'Revengeance' means. Baby don't hurt me.

But here at **Play**, we don't put all our eggs into a metallic sci-fi basket, and so we've got *Call Of Duty: Black Ops II*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale*, the 50 hardest Trophies and Vita freebies packing out the issue as well.

And if you want reviews we've got *Max Payne 3*, *Starhawk*, *Resistance: Burning Skies* and *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* checking in, among others. Which one do you think has scored highest, without looking now? Bet you're wrong.

So there's a lot to be getting on with. These are the least important words in the magazine. The most important ones lie beyond these pages. So go. Read! ONWARDS! INTO THE VOID, **PLAY ARMY**.

Enjoy the issue.

Rking

Editor

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EXCLUSIVE

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The big interviews. The first gameplay details. The hottest screens. All here!

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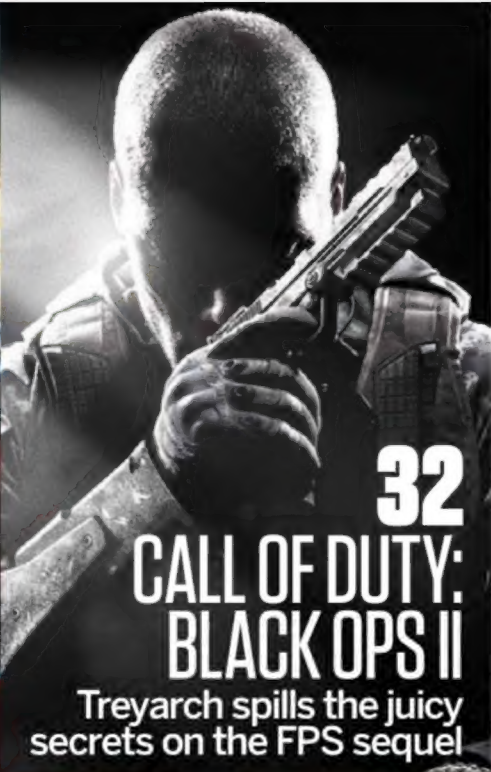
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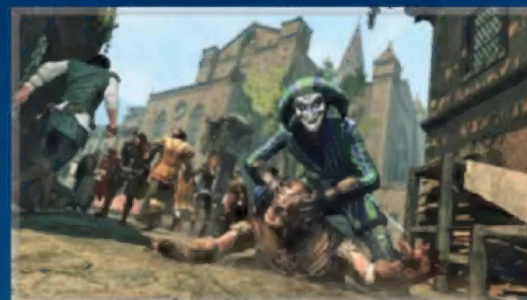
We still can't believe this is a thing.

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EXCLUSIVE ON YOUR DISC

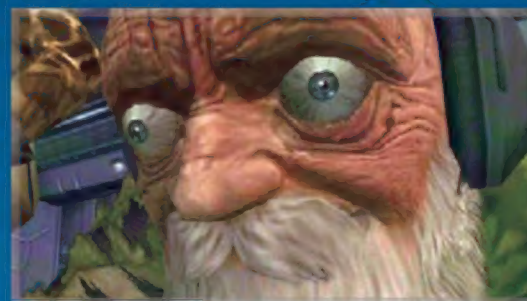
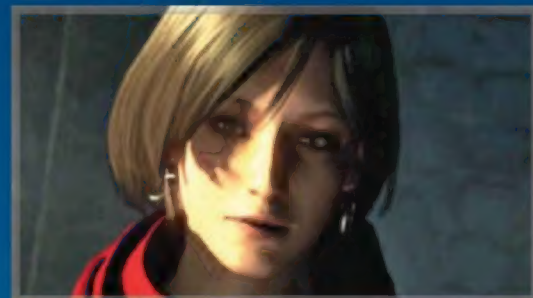


ASSASSIN'S CREED SPECIAL

Every *Assassin's Creed* fan will enjoy this feature. Every single one! If you don't, then you're not actually a real fan. What are you?

RESIDENT EVIL 6 ANALYSIS

There are more clues in the trailer than you thought. You counted four? Wrong. There are 5,419! We've got the best ones here.



METAL GEAR SOLID SECRETS

We take an all-time PlayStation classic and carve it up to serve you a dish brimming with the best, funniest and strangest secrets.

THE WEIRDEST GAMES ON PLAYSTATION 3

Take a trip into the world of demented elephant heads and murderers in grey coats. Oh, go on. It's actually good fun.



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!

“ Thinking back, I think Mr Kojima was probing us to see if there was a chance we would take the job. He must have noticed how excited I looked back in the E3 crowd in 2010 ”

Atsushi Inaba, Platinum Games



WORLD EXCLUSIVE METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE

Kojima Productions and Platinum Games tell us why they had to smash Metal Gear apart to rebuild it into an even bigger, better whole...

"Mr Kojima initially approached us so casually and we thought he was joking." So begins the story of how Kojima Productions of *Metal Gear* fame and Platinum Games, the studio responsible for *Bayonetta*, came together to work on the most surprising, unusual and interesting collaboration of this generation. It's a story that doesn't begin with a PowerPoint presentation or an emailed business proposal, but rather with Platinum Games producer Atsushi Inaba being the same as one of us, watching *Metal Gear Solid: Rising*'s debut trailer as a fascinated fan.

"I remember being in the crowd at the 2010 E3 conference where *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* was revealed and watching excitedly, which influenced my feelings," recalls Inaba. "Thinking back, I think Mr Kojima was probing us to see if there was a chance we

would take the job. He must have noticed how excited I looked back in the crowd that day in 2010. To be honest, even when he first approached us casually, I thought to myself, 'If we can pull off this collaboration, it will be something really special.' I was truly excited."

A lot has happened since then. It's lost the 'Solid' and gained 'Revengeance', Platinum Games was drafted in to rescue the troubled project alongside Kojima Productions, and Inaba has gone from excited fan to producer of the title. Platinum has been busy at work on its own game, arena brawler *Anarchy Reigns*, along with another unannounced project – rumoured to be *Bayonetta 2* – headed up by Hideki Kamiya. Given that Platinum Games houses around 130 staff, that's a lot of work for the studio to take on. So what was the first thing the team did when it decided to tackle *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*? >



YUJI KOREKADO

Producer, Kojima Productions

"While we often don't agree on things, it is those disagreements that enhance the bright spots at both studios"



ETSU TAMARI

Lead writer, Kojima Productions

"The deadlines were tight, but I was able to write with high efficiency. I don't think quality suffered at all"



ATSUSHI INABA

Producer, Platinum Games

"Platinum Games does not have free rein to do with the *Metal Gear* world as we please"



KENJI SAITO

Director, Platinum Games

"We are approaching *Revengeance* with a focus on the same great control response you found in *Bayonetta*"



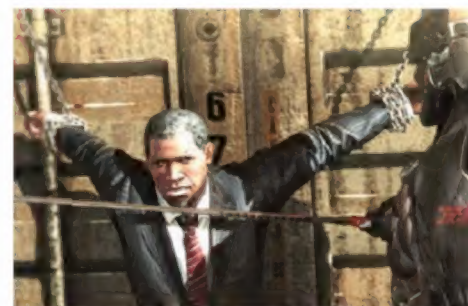
> "We started off by picking a director and then putting together the team," explains Inaba. "Once that was set, we had to put all our energies into reworking the initial concept for the game. We had to take so many things into consideration during this period so we could get to work on remaking the game – bringing the Platinum Games touch to the title while staying true to the *Metal Gear* franchise, pushing the reset button on Kojima Productions' *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* while still exploiting the parts of that game that worked. It took a good chunk of time, and, of course, we were in nearly constant communication with Kojima Productions."

It's worth remembering that point. This isn't Kojima Productions handing the project off to Platinum Games with a 'C U IN 12 MONTHS LOL' Post-It attached. This is a collaboration. Given that Kojima Productions is known as the house of

all things *Metal Gear*, it's also there to ensure that *Revengeance* sticks to the series' lore. "The *Metal Gear* world is firmly established, and Platinum Games does not have free rein to do with it as we please," explains Inaba. "Instead, we all approach things from the standpoint that the gameplay should be very Platinum Games-esque, and from that point of view, we have been pretty free to design the action game elements to our liking."

SLICING GAMEPLAY

So what about the actual gameplay? When *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* was born, the mantra was 'cut anything'. We saw Raiden slice through soldiers, cars, supporting pillars and watermelons, as he could angle his trademark sword to cleanly dissect anything before him. This is ultimately what caused *Metal Gear*



Solid: Rising to collapse in on itself, thanks to the ensuing identity crisis – was it an action game? A stealth game? Won't level design break if everything can be cut?

Platinum Games is clearly taking *Revengeance* down an action path – why else bring in the genre's best if you're not going to play to their strengths? – but the studio has also found a way to keep the original vision intact. "We've based core concepts on the original Kojima Productions idea of

TOTAL CONTROL

Director Kenji Saito talks us through Raiden's offensive arsenal of moves in *Revengeance*



It gets a bit messy in Raiden's line of work.

'cut anything', but we've developed all of the game systems in-house here at Platinum Games," adds director Kenji Saito. "As for the game engine, we've added this 'cut anything' system into our in-house engine/toolchain so we can create the content here. As far as combat goes, we are creating things here with an eye on staying true to what we feel makes great combat."

So like previous Platinum titles *Vanquish* and *Bayonetta*, then? "*Vanquish* is a third-person shooter, a totally different genre, and thus that would be comparing apples to oranges," Saito answers. "*Bayonetta*, on the other hand, does share the action genre with *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*, and so they share a key focus – they have to feel great to play. We are approaching *Revengeance* with a focus on the same great control response you found in *Bayonetta*." >



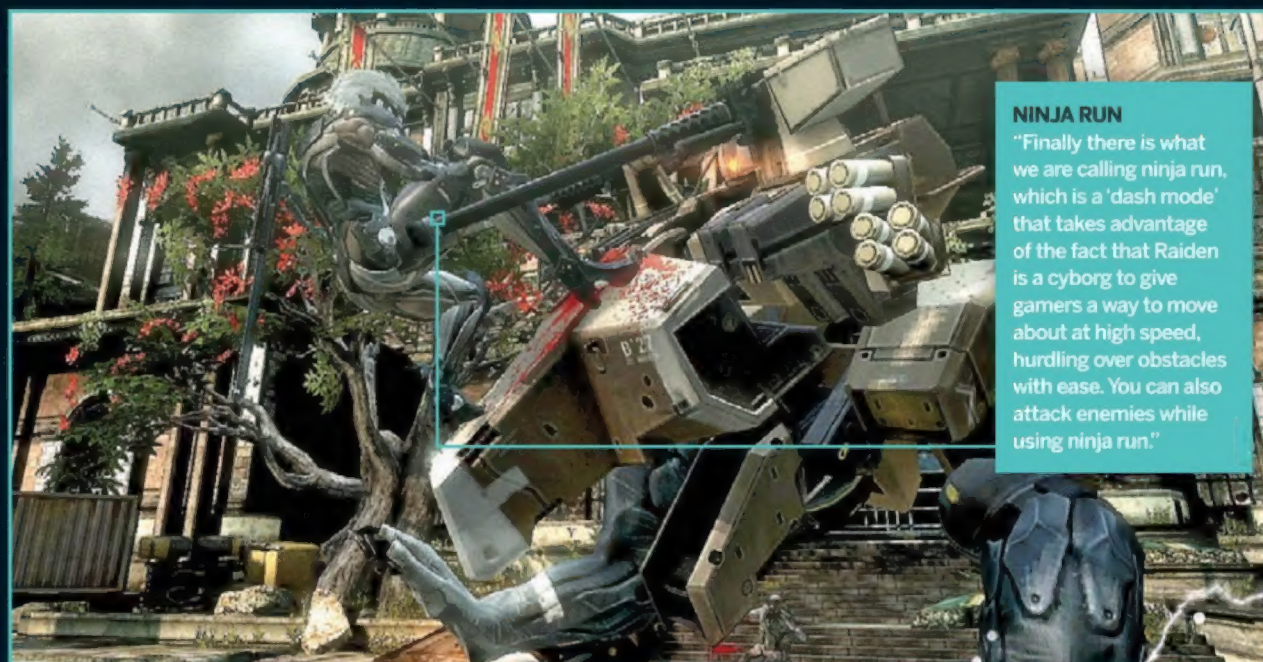
SLASH

"Slash mode can be employed in a number of situations. For example, after weakening an enemy with normal attacks, or knocking them off their feet with a combo. You can even launch them into the air, leaping upwards to hack them apart. Slash mode allows a tremendous amount of freedom for the player in how he decides to deliver the killing blow."



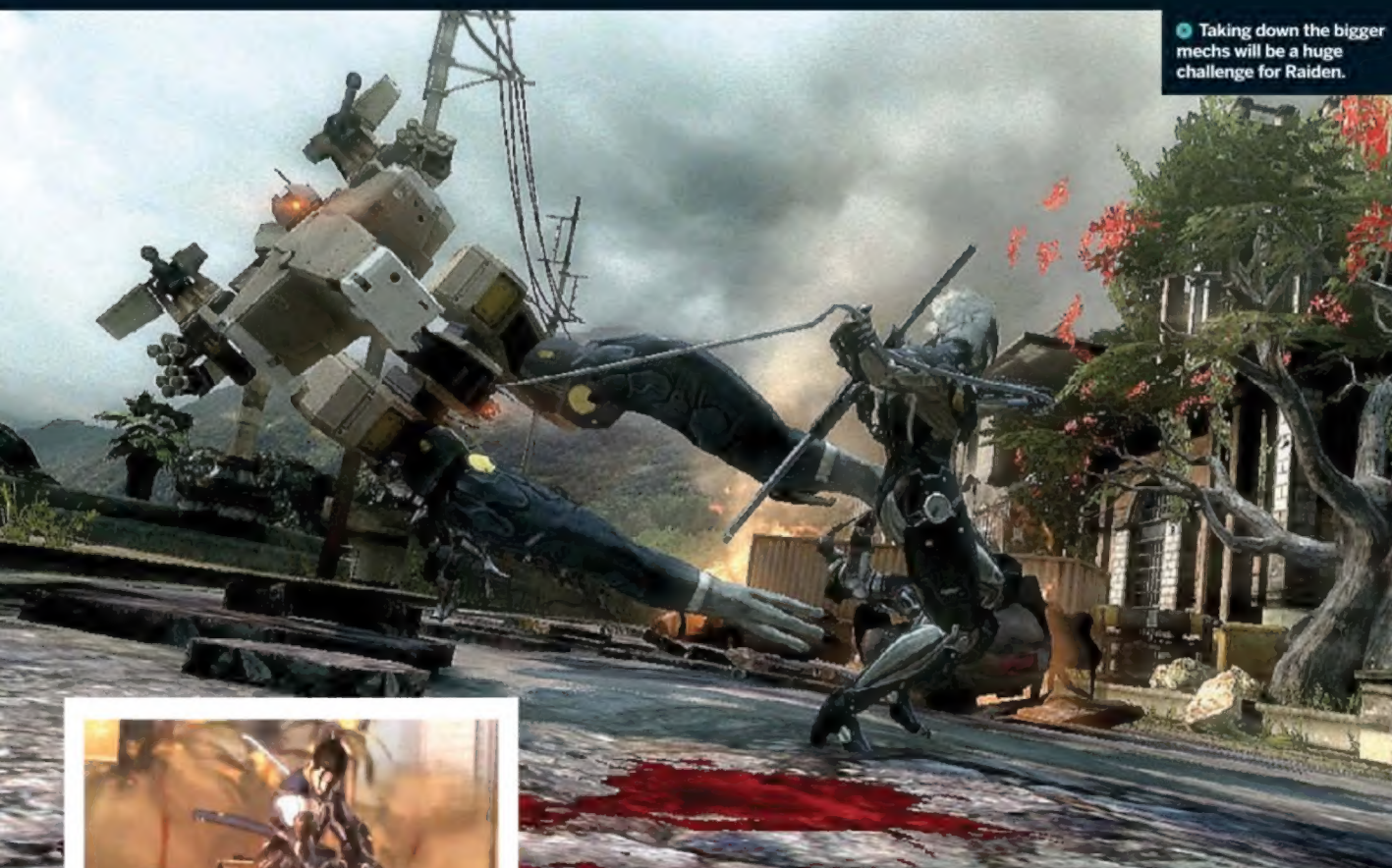
SUB-WEAPONS

"Sub-weapons let you employ some of the things you've seen in previous games, like grenades or rocket launchers, against enemies. We've also included some of the props that series fans love, so that allows you to take enemies by surprise, then launch into Slash mode to make them pay."



NINJA RUN

"Finally there is what we are calling ninja run, which is a 'dash mode' that takes advantage of the fact that Raiden is a cyborg to give gamers a way to move about at high speed, hurdling over obstacles with ease. You can also attack enemies while using ninja run."



• Taking down the bigger mechs will be a huge challenge for Raiden.



KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS ON... DEBUT TRAILER CONTROVERSY

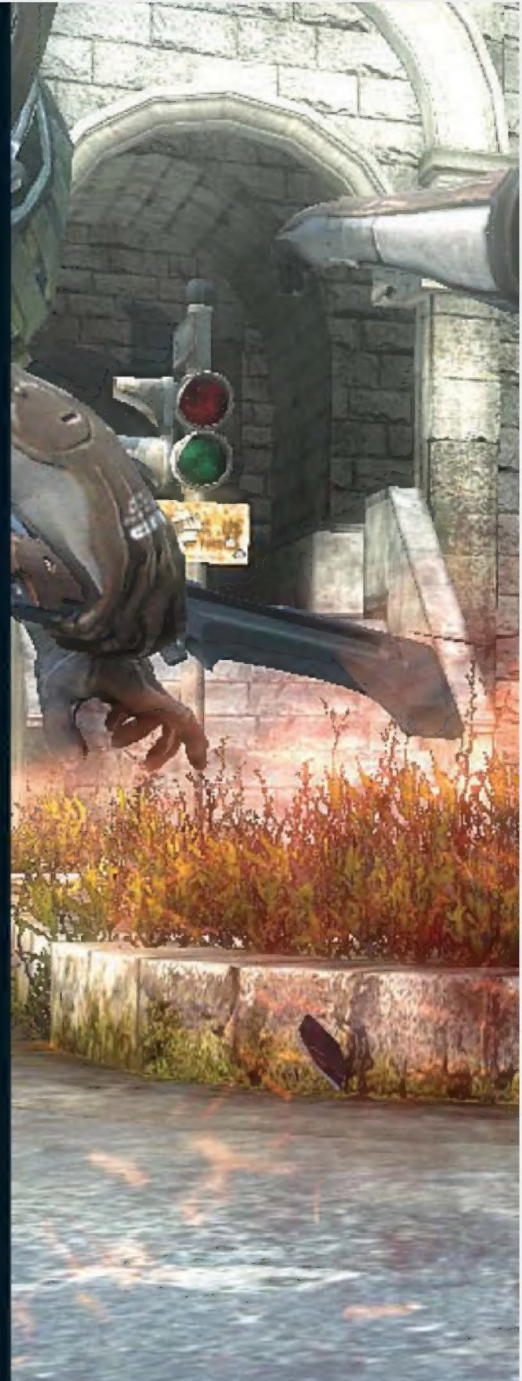
When the debut trailer for *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* was unveiled at the VGAs, series fans were split by their reaction. Some loved the fusion of speed, action, energy and *Metal Gear*, while others felt it wasn't a *Metal Gear* game at all. "It had a very good reception at the VGA ceremony," says Yuji Korekado. "But there was some confusion among old-school *Metal Gear Solid* fans following the show. We tried to focus on what has been changed, so we could emphasise our collaboration, and that might be the reason behind the confusion. However, I believe that if you play the game, you'll fully recognise the ties it has to past titles in the series."



• *Revengeance* will tackle serious themes but features humour too. Like this guy.



• Raiden's sub-weapon attacks give him a tactical edge over enemies.





● Slashing is Raiden's main way of attacking, along with sub-weapons and ninja run.

● Raiden is hired to protect the prime minister, then it goes a bit... wrong.



> Producer Yuji Korekado from Kojima Productions also sheds light on how the cutting mechanic will be implemented, and it's all down to tweaking the original mantra ever so slightly: "We want players to enjoy 'slashing at will' rather than simply 'slashing everything'. Players can select how they want to slash objects. We want players to experience the fun and thrill of using the game's unique slashing mechanics to cut their opponents to pieces. They can choose to slash at a vital point or purposely miss it, angle their blade to hit in gaps in enemy armour, or just slash quickly without aiming. We wanted to give players the freedom to enjoy the game's mechanics in a way that suits each individual."

Raiden's gameplay is centred around three mechanics – slashing, sub-weapons and ninja run. Slash is the obvious, with added touches such as knockdown combos, launchers and aerial slashes too, while sub-weapons include rocket launchers and grenades, and seem to also feature a rope-dart weapon of sorts. Finally, ninja run is described as a 'dash mode', allowing Raiden to quickly scamper over obstacles. He can also attack out of ninja run. In isolation, none of these things

sound too impressive, but it's easy to see how they can all be combined – ninja run to close the gap, launching your opponent into the air, leaping after them and slamming them back to earth, throwing a grenade at their downed body for extra damage. It'll be interesting to see how everything slots together.

STORY OF REVENGE AND LOST EYES

Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance is set a few years after the events of *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots*. Raiden joins Maverick Security, a private military company that employs him as security for the prime minister of a developing African nation. As expected, it's a job slightly more dangerous than ticking off your rota and ushering suspicious-looking loiterers in baseball caps on their way and, sure enough, an unknown group of cyborgs attacks. Raiden narrowly escapes with his life, losing his left hand and left eye. Worse, the prime minister is assassinated. Rather than arranging a meeting to discuss his poor job performance, Maverick informs Raiden that the group is known as

Desperado Enterprises, and it turns out the attack is Desperado's attempt to grab power. Raiden, with a new cyborg body, sets out to put down their coup d'état.

However, taking control of the country is not Desperado's real objective, and the events of *Revengeance* will see Raiden motivated "far beyond the call of duty". The lead writer on *Metal Gear Rising*, Etsu Tamari, hints at big things awaiting the player: "While the structure of the story is in itself rather simple, fitting for an action game, the experience of the overall game will make the player think about a lot of things."

It's an interesting promise because the only things we on **Play** tend to think about when playing games are chips, Trophies and pausing the game to check Facebook. But regardless of how big the themes are, Korekado reminds us that *Metal Gear Rising* is a game tailor-made for action and speed – the series' infamously long cut-scenes are gone ("the focus is on quality over length"), its battles and set pieces are being tweaked to perfection ("scenarios are repeatedly being revisited") and the team is getting its priorities right ("there is a story to be experienced through the gameplay"). >



IT'S THE OLD VERSION VS THE BRAND NEW VERSION

It was *Solid: Rising* and now it's *Rising: Revengeance*, but what exactly are the big differences between the two?

METAL GEAR SOLID:
RISING

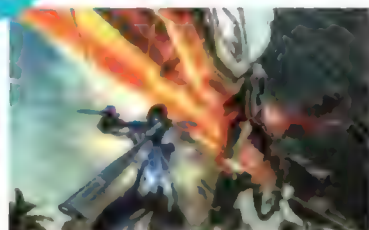
VS

METAL GEAR RISING:
REVENGEANCE



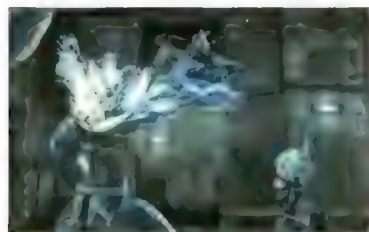
ABSORB LIFE

The initial concept for *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* seemed to have Raiden absorbing life from the cyborgs he sliced apart, possibly as a way to regain health.



GET STUCK IN

No absorbing life and no gimmicks, *Revengeance* is a focused title that's cramming in the action and not letting anything get in the way.



CUT ANYTHING

Anything could be cut at any angle, which wasn't simply a combat mechanic but seemed to extend to altering the level as well.



CUT AT WILL

The slight alteration means you can still slice through enemies as you wish, and likely through some environmental objects too.



SLOW PACE

With the studio unsure of the identity of the game, *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* was caught between stealth and action with an unsure pace.



FAST PACE

The speed has been kicked up approximately 3 billion notches for *Revengeance*, ditching any stealth pretensions for all-out action.



Raiden's alternate view mode will allow him to scout ahead.



Enemies hiding in cardboard boxes? Cute *Metal Gear* touch.

> It's also worth noting that several *Metal Gear* touches and conventions will make it in. There will be plenty of humour mixed in alongside the serious themes, such as enemies hiding in trademark cardboard boxes, and you can talk to supporting characters over codec to gain a deeper insight into the story and the world of *Revengeance*. Yet perhaps the most pleasing quote, for those *Metal Gear* fans who weren't too sure of the direction that this game was taking, is left to Korekado: "It isn't a stealth game, but I think the player will feel this is a *Metal Gear* series title by playing the game."

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Revengeance is interesting in more ways than one. It's a *Metal Gear* game, which automatically guarantees interest through name alone – *Metal Gear Acid 2* proved that theory, if nothing else. The troubled development period has drawn extra eyes to the project, if only to see where it ends up. The growing fan base of Platinum Games has been brought in through the developer's involvement. But how are the studios dividing the work?

"In terms of the story, worldview, the visuals that depict that world, and the staging, this is a joint effort with Platinum Games and the staff of Kojima Productions at its core," explains Korekado. "Since we began collaborating, Platinum Games has made lots of bold suggestions. They've all been fantastic ideas that build into the game exactly what makes cyborg Raiden so special. We both are large studios involved in

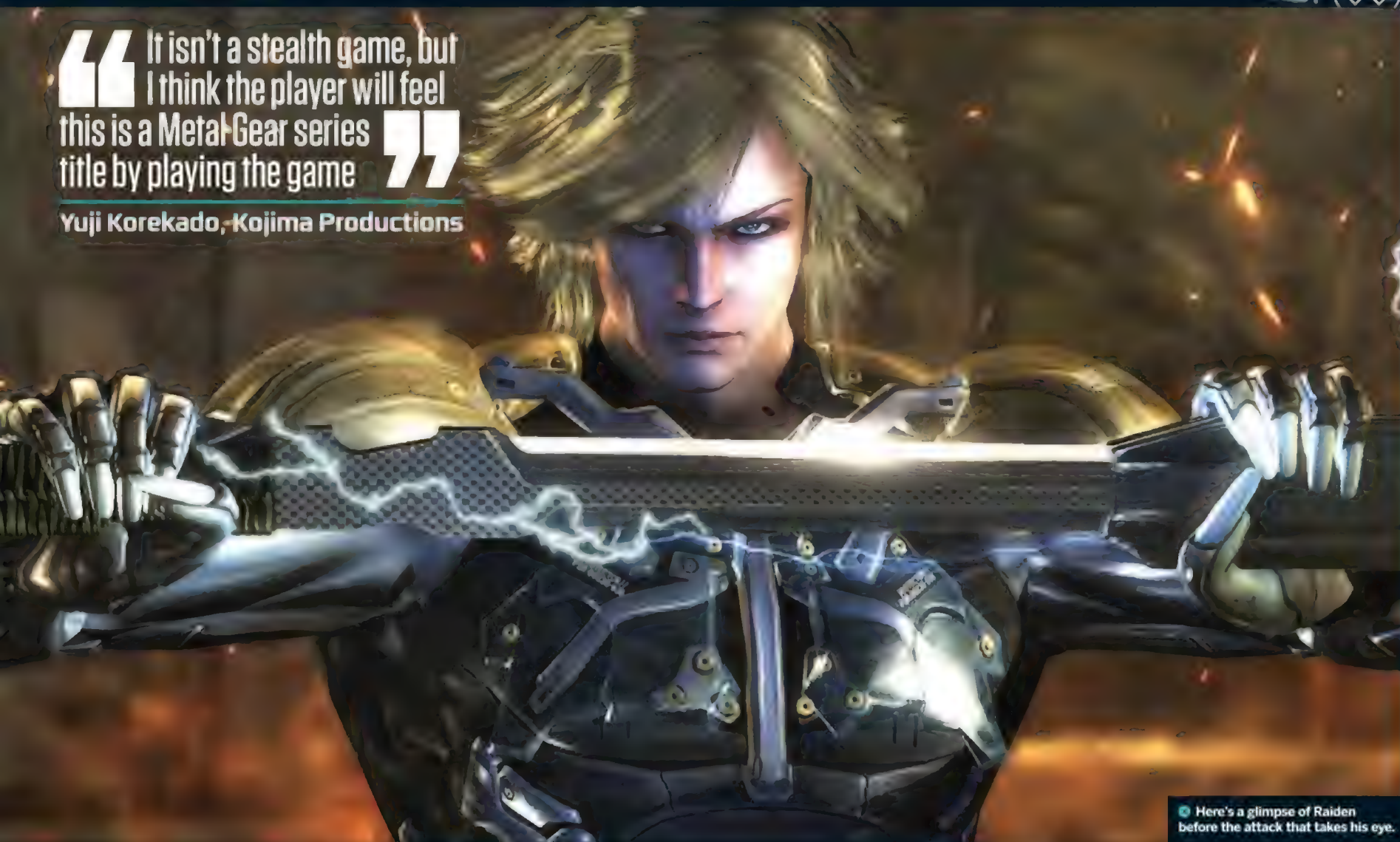
crafting games, and while we often don't agree on things, it is those very disagreements that enhance the bright spots at both studios."

Disagreements? That's not the only pressure facing the unique super-studio partnership, as the late change of plans that saw *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* shapeshift into its new *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* skin meant tight deadlines for the writing as well. "With *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*, only overall direction, themes and stage structure were shared with the director, while the details of the story were left to my discretion, allowing me to quickly finish scenarios," continues Tamari. "Because of that, the deadlines were tight, but I was able to write with extremely high efficiency. And I don't think quality suffered at all because of the shortened writing period. I am very satisfied with where we ended up."

If all goes according to plan, we'll end up with a brilliant game that does justice to both the fine heritage of the *Metal Gear* series and Platinum Games' already-impressive history, and two studios that have learnt a lot from the experience. "We think it is an important opportunity for us to be able to develop a game in someone else's franchise," concludes Inaba. "It is an incredible learning experience for us to be able to work within the elaborate, realised world of the *Metal Gear* series. It is going to teach us a variety of lessons as we continue to make action games, and hopefully those lessons will allow us to step up our game as a company." ☹

“It isn't a stealth game, but I think the player will feel this is a Metal Gear series title by playing the game”

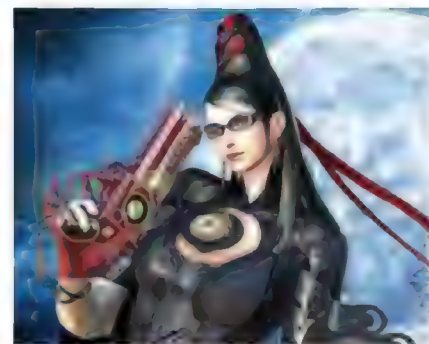
Yuji Korekado, Kojima Productions



Here's a glimpse of Raiden before the attack that takes his eye.



If you want big adversaries, *Revengeance* is set to deliver.



PLATINUM GAMES ON...

PS3 AS LEAD PLATFORM

Atsushi Inaba let the world know over Twitter that PlayStation 3 is the lead platform for *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*. Following the disappointing PS3 version of *Bayonetta*, this is great news for us, so what advantages will Platinum gain from putting PS3 development first? "Platinum Games approaches all multiplatform development by developing an intermediary platform, the PC, first," Inaba answers. "Then we move the content of the game onto the lead console platform, then the next step is to port that over to the next target platform. With that scenario in mind, the PS3 lends itself well to being the 'lead platform.' There really isn't any particular advantage that we are exploiting."



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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN™



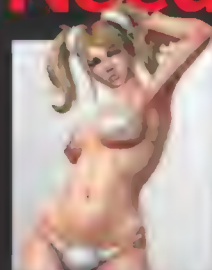
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YOUR PLAYGROUND.



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Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

Need To Know



Lollipop Chainsaw
sexy outfits free for all
They might be little more than dental floss with strategically placed hearts but *Lollipop Chainsaw*'s sexy bonus outfits were previously the realm of pre-order bonuses. No more! Warner has confirmed you can unlock them during the game. Phwoar! Lads! Etc.

VITA



IS IT A SUCCESS?

Not far into its life and already being written off, we weigh up the facts and figures on the Vita's story so far – has it worked out?

We're about four months post-release with the PS Vita – we've had time to think, to analyse, to see the stats and to hypothesise. In other words, it's the perfect point to go over what we know, what we think we know and what we expect to know about Sony's beast of a handheld.

At the time of writing, things stand as such: PS Vita has sold around 2 million units worldwide. From an initial sales blast on launch in its respective territories, figures have, it's fair to say, dwindled somewhat. While they're around 8,000-12,000 units a week in Japan, we don't get official figures for the EU and US. Educated guesses put them at about 25,000 units per week, though.

These numbers aren't bad – it's not Xbox 360 in Japan levels of humiliation, at least – but they just don't compare to, say, the 3DS – 85,000 units a week in Japan, roughly 45,000-50,000 each per week in the US and EU. The system, it's safe to say, needs a kick up the backside from somewhere or it's going to be remembered as nothing but a failed beast of a handheld.

But what can be done? A lot. And what's going to be done? A lot. Sony is pushing big on the apps and non-gaming elements of the Vita – Facebook, Skype, Foursquare and co all already occupy some space on many Vita memory cards, and

there's sure to be more in future. Netflix is already out there in the US, so it's no big stretch to see it and LoveFilm coming to our Vitas. From there we would predict the likes of BBC iPlayer, 4oD and even Sky Go coming to the handheld. Spotify, Instagram, Pinterest – the list of established services and up-and-comers grows. Why wouldn't Sony push to get these apps available?

Games are the most important factor, though. *Call Of Duty*, *Monster Hunter* and *LittleBigPlanet* are among the big names that will arrive and change the Vita's fortunes for the better. *COD* is an obvious one, and *Monster Hunter*'s success on the PSP – 14 million sales worldwide – will surely translate to the Vita. Then there's the less obvious routes like through PS Suite – Sony's support of indie and upcoming developers could end up having a hugely positive effect on the system.

Whatever happens, we're not quite ready to call time on the Vita just yet. While right now things aren't rosy, it's too soon to write the machine off – and there's too much good stuff on the horizon for us to say there's no hope.



IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS



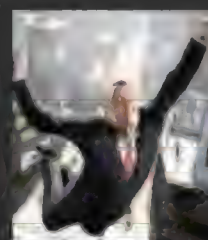
Operation Raccoon City sells 2 million

We really don't know how this has happened, but this is the closest proof anyone will find that sorcery is alive and well in the 21st Century - *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City* has survived its critical mauling (33% in issue 217) and sold 2 million copies.



Capcom legend reveals horror title for PS Vita

Keiji Inafune, the man responsible for *Mega Man*, *Onimusha* and *Dead Rising*, has revealed his first major project since leaving Capcom: *Soul Sacrifice* for PS Vita. The game takes place in a book that's actually a demon. A bit like *Play*. Ho ho ho! Full preview next month.



Play as Stan Lee in The Amazing Spider-Man

It's nice when you get pre-order bonuses that go beyond unlocking Noob Cannon 6000 or Purple Costume #2 or whatever, so kudos to Activision for having playable Spidey creator Stan Lee as a pre-order incentive, creaking his way around the sky in *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

VITA VS OTHERS ATTACH RATES

1.4

AVG NUMBER OF VITA GAMES BOUGHT PER CONSOLE

3.7

AVG NUMBER OF PSP GAMES BOUGHT PER CONSOLE

8.5

AVG NUMBER OF PS3 GAMES BOUGHT PER CONSOLE

10.6

AVG NUMBER OF PS2 GAMES BOUGHT PER CONSOLE

9.2

AVG NUMBER OF PSone GAMES BOUGHT PER CONSOLE

TOP FIVE FRANCHISES

NO OF TOP FIVE FRANCHISES CURRENTLY ON VITA

FIFA

1

NO OF TOP FIVE FRANCHISES ANNOUNCED FOR VITA

CALL OF DUTY, METAL GEAR SOLID

2

NO OF TOP FIVE FRANCHISES UNANNOUNCED FOR VITA

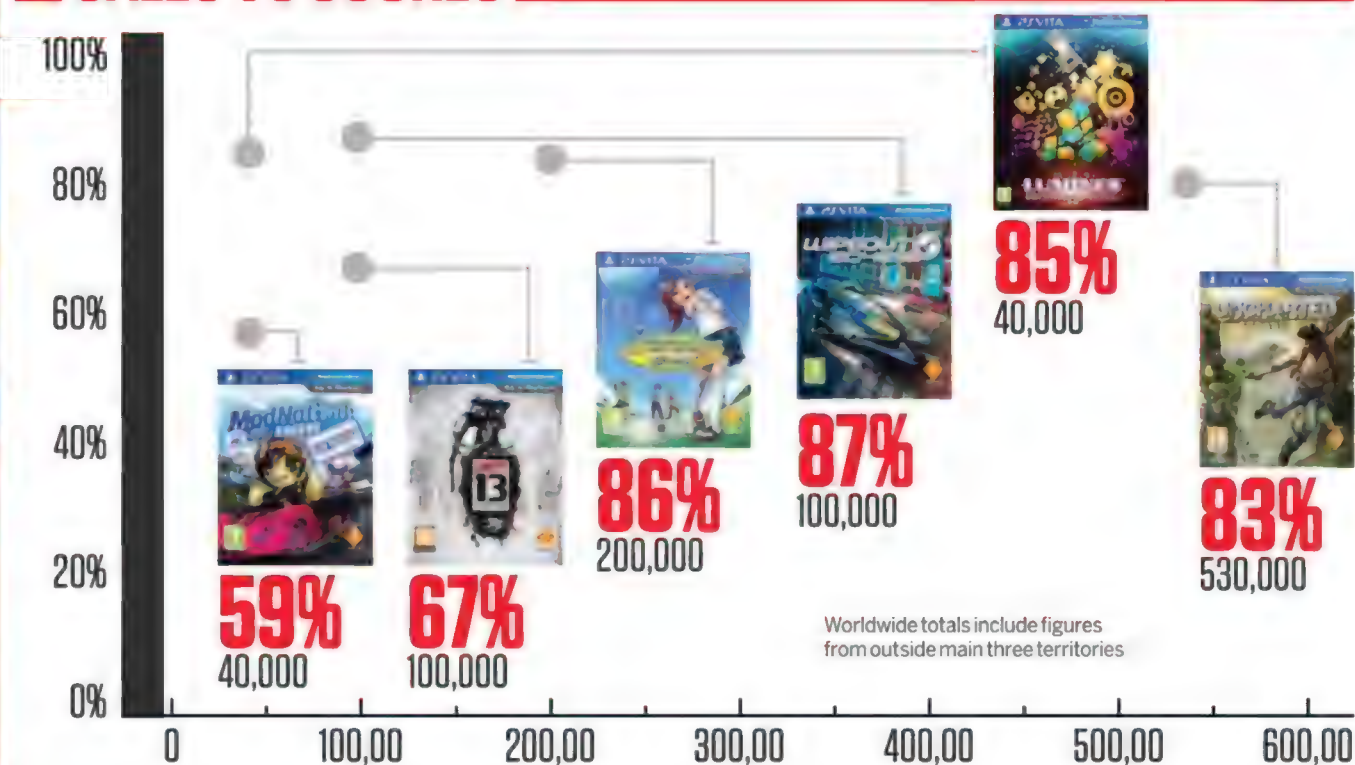
GRAN TURISMO, GRAND THEFT AUTO

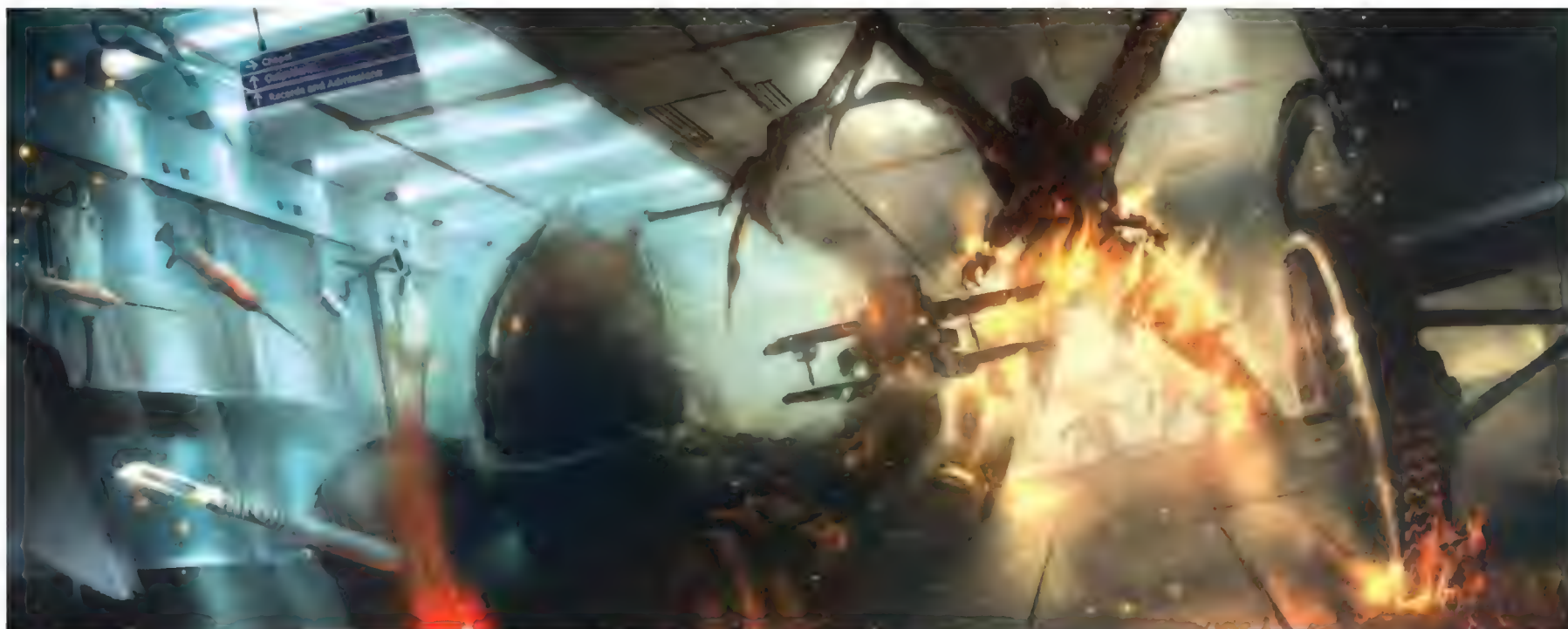
2

VITA'S SALES FIGURES



SALES VS SCORES





DEAD SPACE 3 REVEALED

Here are the four big changes rumoured for EA's monster sequel



DROP-IN/DROP-OUT CO-OP

SIMILAR TO: *Resident Evil 5*, *Dead Island*
WE COULD NAME a million games here, give or take a few, that support drop-in/drop-out co-op. Everyone is doing it these days. The surprise is that a game like *Dead Space 3* would support it. Won't it kill the suspense? The tension? It's the mechanic mostly blamed for *Resident Evil 5*'s slide away from survival horror towards bullet-riddled action. It seems that some lessons have been learnt here, however, such as the rumour that players cannot revive each other. One death means reloading from the last checkpoint, so players will still have an air of vulnerability about them.



STORY CHANGES IN CO-OP

SIMILAR TO: *Dead Rising 2: Off The Record*, *Call Of Juarez: The Cartel*
VERY FEW GAMES have campaigns that can be altered through the influence and actions of a co-op partner – most stay the same (*Dead Island*, *Army Of Two*) and some have separate campaigns altogether (*Portal 2*, *Mass Effect 3*). *Dead Space 3*, however, will apparently remove certain events when playing in co-op, so it's neither a separate campaign for two players nor something that rigidly stays the same as solo play. Will this be a slimmed-down campaign or something that changes depending on what the players do? We suspect the former, quietly hope for the latter.



SOLDIER ENEMIES

SIMILAR TO: *Resident Evil 5*, *Mass Effect 3*
NEW TO THE *Dead Space* series in the third instalment are heavily armed soldiers, who use guns and grenades. What does this mean for the gameplay? There's no way to introduce guns and grenades without introducing a way for the player to protect himself from that threat, and for a game with movement as slow and lumbering as *Dead Space*, that likely means some kind of cover system. The soldiers can become Necromorphs as well – think *Resident Evil 5* and the way some of the human enemies in that explode into bigger creatures when killed for the closest comparison.

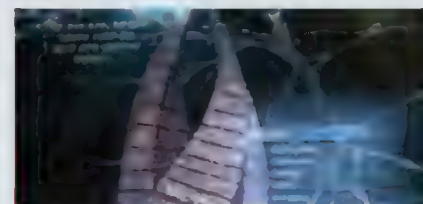


CLARKE 'HAUNTED' BY SECONDARY CHARACTER

SIMILAR TO: *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*, *Devil May Cry 3*
THE FROZEN PLANET of Tau Volantis was rumoured as the setting a while back, but now rumours have pushed the boat out even further, suggesting Isaac Clarke is haunted by a second personality, Shadow Isaac. It's an interesting angle – *Black Ops* had its plot anchored around an imaginary character, while Dante fights a shadow version of himself in *Devil May Cry 3* – but no game has yet been constructed entirely around a shadow protagonist. It'll tap into the psychological aspect of the series and should give Visceral Games plenty of room to conjure up horrific monsters and demons.

HIDDEN MESSAGES IN DEAD SPACE 2

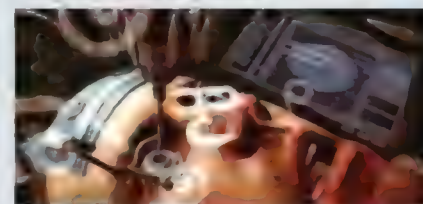
Dead Space 2 had many secret messages written in the game's unique alien language. Here are the more disturbing ones, suggesting a nasty future for Isaac Clarke...



"In the end it all comes down to just one thing"



"Unity after death, unity forever"



"The world must end"



"Come join with me in eternal unity"

MORRIGAN

Linda Le, known to the interwebs as Vampy Bit Me, steals our soul in exchange for a few words on her stunning Morrigan cosplay...



Do you go to the expo dressed up as Morrigan or do you get changed when you're there? We can't really see Morrigan

riding on the bus.

I actually can do both. Being able to dress yourself in a cosplay is already a process in itself. With that particular cosplay, the head wings are definitely dangerous, so I have to make sure I don't walk or sit near anyone. I can literally poke someone's eyes out.

You've done a lot of cosplay. Do you have a superhero wardrobe at home full of your old costumes?

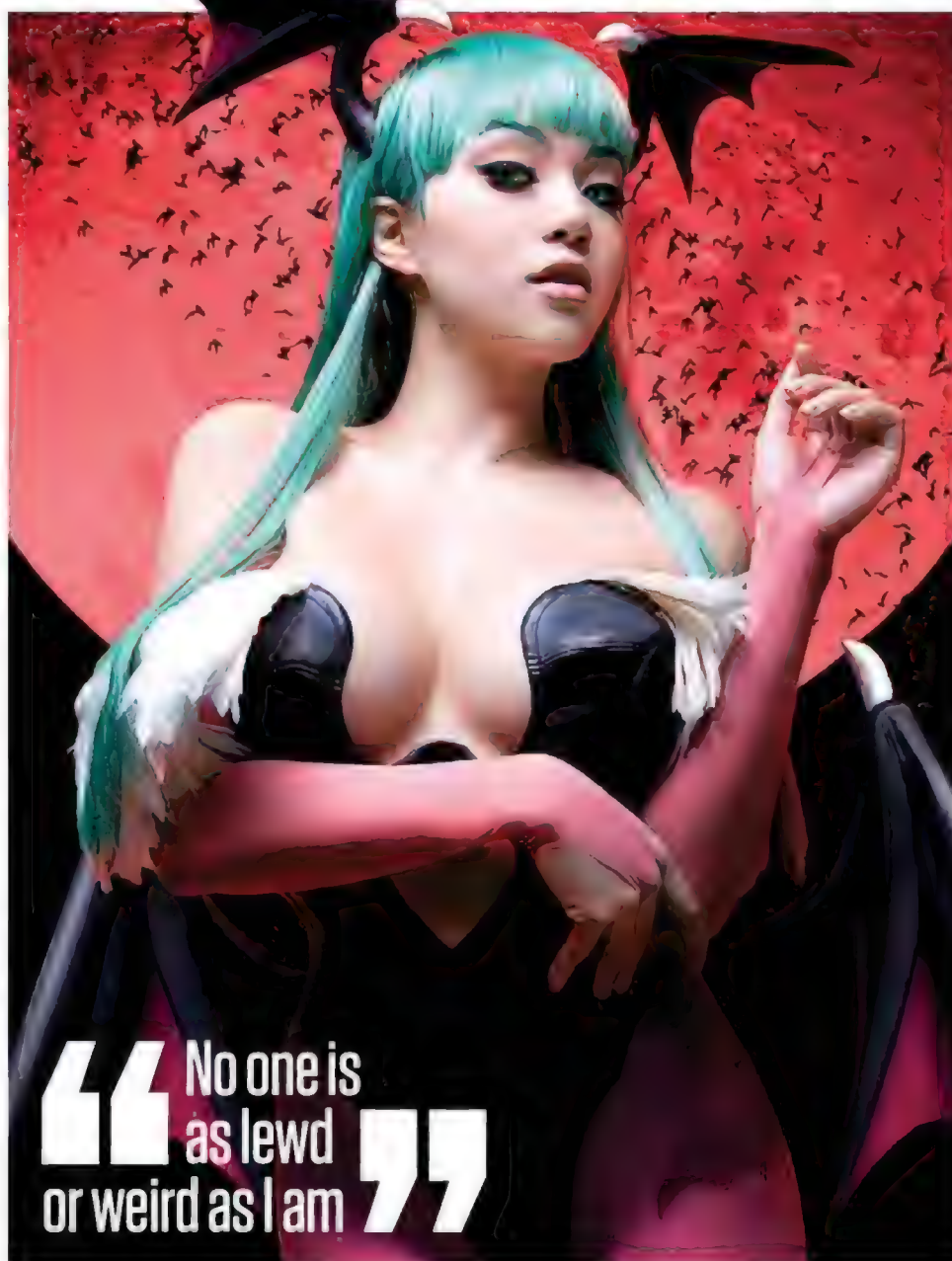
Yes I do. I have a separate room where I keep all my wigs, clothes, shoes, and practically everything I need to fully furnish a small army.

What's the weirdest fan comment or email you've received?

At this point, no one I have come across is as lewd or weird as I am, so everything is pretty nice in comparison.

Our favourite character in *Marvel vs Capcom 3* is MODOK. What are the chances of you doing a cosplay as him?

Nothing is impossible at this point. I'm rather chibi, so it'll almost be like a Puzzle Fighter-style cosplay!



JAMES BOND IS BACK

007 LEGENDS INBOUND

Activision promised to "launch gamers back through time" when the publisher announced *007 Legends*. We presume that was a reference to how the game will tie six *Bond* films together, concluding with *Skyfall*, rather than celebrating a machine that hurls gamers through a window into a time portal. The good news is it can learn valuable lessons from previous *Bond* games...



1 JAMES BOND 007: BLOOD STONE

KEEP PACE HIGH: A serviceable outing from the late Bizarre Creations. The action was good but the driving bits were awful. The quality has to be consistent to ensure we keep playing through to the end.



2 GOLDENEYE 007: RELOADED

MAKE STEALTH WORK: Patrol guards were arranged like bowling pins with their backs turned, patiently waiting for you to smash through them with stealth attacks. It felt unnatural, forced and gimmicky.



3 QUANTUM OF SOLACE

DON'T COPY GOLDENEYE: Not the *GoldenEye* referenced above but the Nintendo 64 classic, which *Quantum Of Solace* stuck rigidly to. What worked in 1997 doesn't work 15 years later. An obvious point, no?

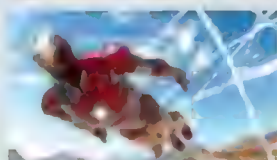
WANT TO PLAY AS THE AVENGERS?

With no Avengers videogame, here are the only places you'll find Marvel's heroes



CAPTAIN AMERICA

Captain America: Super Soldier 70%
The credit here goes to whoever at Sega said: "Hey, you know that *Batman: Arkham Asylum* game? Let's copy that!" Loses points because someone else said: "...but more drab, right?"



IRON MAN

Iron Man 58%
The best thing you could say about this is they got the right shade of red for Iron Man, a bigger achievement than you realise considering the cut-scenes look like a Channel 5 adaptation of the comic.



BLACK WIDOW

Iron Man 2 50%
Had the artist seen Scarlett Johansson before? Maybe he was just told what she looked like. "She's got dark curly hair and... um... stuff. Get it done by Tuesday morning! Don't make her look like a potato."



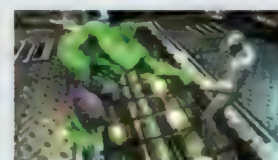
THOR

Thor: God Of Thunder 38%
It's sort of based on the film, at least until the bit where Thor fights a Frost Giant about 8 billion times. Maybe it'll be in the special edition re-release on Blu-ray. *Thor: God Of Chunder Special Edition*. Get it?



HAWKEYE

Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3 78%
Exploding arrow! Triple arrow! Triple arrow! Exploding arrow! Triple arrow! Triple arrow! Thankfully, Hawkeye has slightly more varied dialogue in the film.



THE HULK

Marvel Ultimate Alliance 64%
He might be the force everyone fears in *The Avengers*, but in *Marvel Ultimate Alliance*, his body rating is only 22. 22! Elektra has a body rating of 36. What does this mean? Elektra is tougher than Hulk?

YOUR SHOUT

Play readers have their say

f facebook

facebook.com/PlayMagUK

YASMIN MCGREGOR

I got the collection and started a game on each. I'm loving the series, and though there's some negativity on the next game I'm saying BRING IT! As long as it sticks to the story I'm happy to accept the new one.

TONY WATSON SKELTON

I've still got the first three and still like them, though, weirdly, when I bought 4, I couldn't get into it...

BRADLEY

ALEXANDER FISHER

It looks and feels like the great *Devil May Cry 3*: Dante's

Awakening. My only concern is that little girl from the trailer. Definitely one to watch.

LEE SNELLING

What's *DMC*?

MICHAEL RUSSELL

I'm playing 2 now. Love it. BTW, is there any reason for me to buy *DMC Collection* on PS3 when I already have 1-3SE on PS2?

STUART MACDONALD

DMC2 set the standards for videogame fashion – outfits designed by Diesel. Nuff said. (hipster hashtag here)



YouTube

youtube.com/PlayMagUK

I'm looking forward to kicking ass with the Million Stab ability. Thumbs up if you're with me!

MRGUGAGE2

I'm fine with this game, but why call it *Devil May Cry*? Why not just have it as a standalone title?

IDERPALLOVERTHEPLACE

I swear to God if anyone buys this they are not a *DMC* fan. It's one thing to make Dante look like the CEO of Ninja Theory, but to make a game with similar combat that doesn't even seem as awesome as it was in *DMC3*, and s**t out some new story not even relevant to the original, all while slapping the *DMC* name on it, is crossing the line.

TACOHERO



twitter

twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

@ABLUEFLYINGCAR

The trailer is pretty badass.

@HANKBIZZLE

The first was bundled, the second was poo. Can you blame people for not buying the third? I have and love all three BTW :)

@FENIXII

All that scares me in the new *DMC* is the frame rate. Ninja Theory has a very unforgettable past.

@_CHASETHELIGHT

Dante is a fa– oh, *DMC*. Err it's all right from what I've played.

@THEZJMAN

DANTE HAS TOO MANY MOVES AND VERGIL'S SWORD IS TOO LONG *rages*

@MATTYD128

I think the franchise should have been retired and new IP explored. Fans may think I'm harsh but I'm only being honest.



Play Online

Want your voice to be heard? Then scream louder at facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK, youtube.com/PlayMagUK and [@PlayMag_UK](https://twitter.com/PlayMag_UK), where we hang out when not doing work (ie. all the time)

DMC: DEVIL MAY CRY

THE BIG QUESTION

IS MOVE DEAD?



YES

- 1 No killer Move exclusive
- 2 Move titles declining year-on-year
- 3 Sales lagged behind Kinect

If Move does end up having its plastic melted down and remoulded into stands for PS Vita, at least Sony tried. Not just a token effort either but a genuine, full-blooded push for Move. *EyePet & Friends*, *Medieval Moves* and *PlayStation Move Heroes* were all strong first-party titles based on exclusive use of PlayStation Move. Sadly, sales of those titles were disappointing and Move is still waiting for the one incredible title that would ensure that people bought the peripheral.

That title isn't on the horizon yet, and the bad news is the number of games being made for Move is actually declining, not increasing. PlayStation Move was released in September 2010 and thanks to a big push from Sony, there were 40 titles launched that year supporting it. In 2011, that number dropped to 27. The previous camera peripheral, EyeToy, had a total of 79 games released in all territories that supported it in some form. Is 79 the magic number where Sony pulls support? It's a worrying thought.

Although Kinect sales dipped dramatically following its successful launch, Microsoft has done well to push commercial games, even if they haven't proved successful critically – *Kinect Star Wars* and *Kinect Sports* are the best examples and helped power healthy sales for Microsoft's motion-detector. Those are the games Sony needs. Without them, Move's bright blue bulby thing grows dimmer by the day.

NO

- 1 BioShock Infinite will support it
- 2 Move implementation stronger than Kinect
- 3 Sports Champions sold over 3 million

It's easy to plump for the white knight angle when defending Move, with FPS behemoth *BioShock Infinite* set to support the peripheral. Even better is that *Play* is responsible for Move being included at all – see our interview with Ken Levine in issue 203 that prompted a phone call to Irrational Studios from Sony – so if this is the, well, move that saves Move, you can thank us at the usual address.

Besides the obvious benefits of a Move-infused advertising campaign – see *Mass Effect 3* firebombing the public with endless 'better with Kinect' adverts – *BioShock Infinite* should also continue the trend of how Move implementation in games has generally been very well received: *Killzone 3*, *LittleBigPlanet 2* and *Resistance 3* are the best examples. While Move is missing the commercially appealing, exclusive titles that Kinect boasts, it can be argued that developers haven't found a way to slot Kinect into existing hardcore titles in the same way that Sony has with Move.

Sports Champions also proved that the right type of Move exclusive can produce sales, as it shifted over 3 million copies worldwide – compare that to fellow PS3 exclusives *Resistance 3* (1.1 million), *inFamous 2* (1.17 million) or *Heavy Rain* (2.12 million) and it's clear that Move does have a big enough install base for developers to earn a chunky slice of profit. In any case, with the next generation coming into view, Sony has to start considering new and innovative control methods. Having spent money researching, manufacturing and launching Move, why not stick with it?

QUESTION: WHY HAS BIOSHOCK INFINITE BEEN DELAYED?

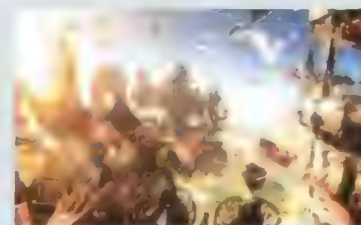


BioShock Infinite was probably meant to be out about four years ago or something, we think. It's been so long since it was announced and delayed so many times that we forget exactly when and where it was initially supposed to be in our hands. But why has it been delayed, now to February 2013? Well, there are some suggestions doing the rounds...



Irrational wants to add multiplayer components to the game.

Some say the studio always had these plans; some claim it's the result of recent focus testing or publisher pressure. Whatever the reasoning, it isn't exactly hard to believe. *Infinite* seems a perfect fit for a multiplayer environment. Would Irrational add this? Judging by how pretty much every other game has multiplayer these days, we'd go with 'yes'.



GTA V has scared Infinite off.

It's not something that would surprise us – a massive release coming at the same time as your massive but unproven release would signal the need to either temper expectations or hold off. The questionable element to this theory is that it lives under the assumption that *GTA V* will actually be released in October or so of this year. That, we're not so sure on.

A Wii U port has slowed development.

Developers seem to want to make real games for the Wii U, so it's not out of the question that Irrational would bring its talents to Nintendo's next console. But delaying the release of *Infinite* so much? We can't see it; not for the release on one format.

ANSWER: We would bet one shiny pound on it being down to the addition of multiplayer. The other reasons just don't smack us as plausible for a delay of this length.

SEX SELLS

Dead Or Alive 5 is toning down the smut, but these games are toning it right back up



1. Super Monkey Ball Vita

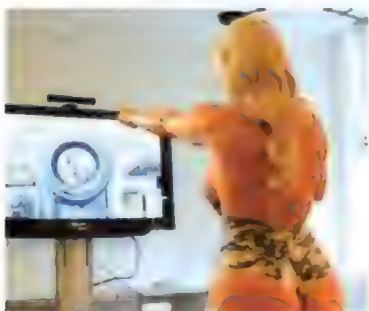
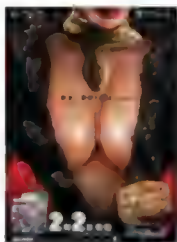
Bikini model bouncing about

Why **Play Isn't In Marketing #45**: Japanese model Yukie Kawamura flouncing around? For our trailer we would have started at 'lasers' and spent the rest of the budget on M&Ms.

2. SoulCalibur V

Poster focusing on its best assets

The greatest thing to come out of this was the Voldo crotch posters designed to strike back and smash the obvious sexism, made better because you know Voldo's nether regions smell like a sailor's foot.



3. Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Coco gets behind Ubisoft's shooter

Maybe she is amazing at *Ghost Recon*. We don't know. We're not going to judge. But you can spot a gamer by the clothes that they wear. Camo hotpants? Nah. Stained hoodie two sizes too big? You know it.



4. Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

Bring on the (boob) wall!

She's trying to be a ninja but her boobs are too big! It's funny, see! We're not sure why a poor comedy skit would drive sales of a gory action game, though. So that's why **Play Isn't In Marketing** reason #46.



5. The Saboteur

Paid to take their clothes off

Opening game of 'what accent is the main character attempting?' aside (Cockney? Irish? Russian?), you get to a bar with topless women dancing... but you have to buy DLC to remove their clothes. Oh. Dear.

INSTANT EXPERT

DEAD OR ALIVE 5

Ninja Gaiden stumbled, but how is DOA shaping up without Itagaki?





WHAT DOES \$10,000 OF GOD OF WAR MERCHANDISE LOOK LIKE?

Superfan Jacob Williams shows off his massive Kratos collection to Play

Think you're a *God Of War* fan? Well, you probably are. It's not our place to dispute that. However, you're not as big a fan as Jacob Williams, who has chased down almost every bit of Kratos merchandise in existence. "The most unique piece that I have is the white PS3 with Kratos' face etched onto it," he told us. "To my knowledge, there are less than five of these worldwide. I have a few imported items, mostly press kits since it seems that Europe gets all the cool stuff. I also have my name credited in the 'Unearthing The Legend' documentary on PSN. I also have all five game directors' autographs from all the past games on the cover art for *God Of War III*."

So what's he missing? "One is the statues that Sony gave to the developers after completing the first *God Of*

War. There are also a few press kits I haven't been able to locate, like *Ghost Of Sparta*. Others are the 'gold copy' of *God Of War Collection* that was given away as a random prize here in the States."

As the world's biggest *God Of War* fan, Jacob knows what he wants to see in *Ascension* too. "I like the gore and action, but I think some cool kills in slow-mo would be cool. Think *Batman: Arkham City*, but blood and gore and Kratos ripping them apart. I really enjoyed the first-person mode in *God Of War III* and I hope they add that back in. Kratos should be able to pick up the enemies' weapons and use them against them. One big thing that needs to be done is more environmental kills – think *The Punisher* for PlayStation 2."

GET GOD OF WAR NEWS FIRST!

THE LATEST ISSUE of *Play* on iTunes and Zinio, beamed straight to your iTunes, Android, Zinio, Newsstand, Apple and so on. That's how you solve your pain. What pain, you say? Come on, now. We know. The pain from wanting to know the latest on *God Of War* as soon as it breaks. What's happened to Kratos? What's the deal with multiplayer? Will Kratos ever smile? This is why we have our spies positioned outside SCE Santa Monica's HQ, looking in with binoculars, transcribing the hushed conversations their wiretaps are picking up.

Now you can be the first to read their reports on *God Of War: Ascension*, *The Last Of Us*, *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* and the other biggest games on PlayStation 3 by hitting up *Play*'s Zinio page at gb.zinio.com/playissue or *Play*'s iTunes entry at itunes.apple.com/gb/app/play-magazine-app/id471290041. We have many, many secrets. You now know where to find them...



THE STRANGEST MERCHANDISE OUT THERE



DEAD OR ALIVE PILLOW

Yes, it's Kasumi as a pillow. You either have the small pillow or the life-size hugging version, available in dress or bikini form, for full-on, throbbing perviness. It never went on sale over here, as the UK's refined, gentlemanly culture wouldn't allow it. Possibly.

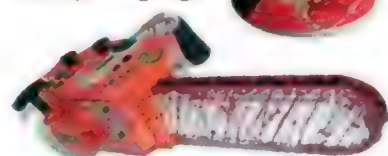


PORTAL 2 POTATO SCIENCE KIT

If you've played through *Portal 2* you'll know why this potato science kit, complete with flashing light, the voice of GLaDOS and brand new material from the game's writers, is bloody brilliant. And if you haven't played *Portal 2*, then still – it's a talking potato!

STREET FIGHTER ENERGY DRINKS

We have no idea what radioactive horse wee tastes like, but this is probably as close to that taste as can legally be sold in the UK. Named after special moves in *Street Fighter*. Yoga Fire curry range presumably cancelled at the planning stage.

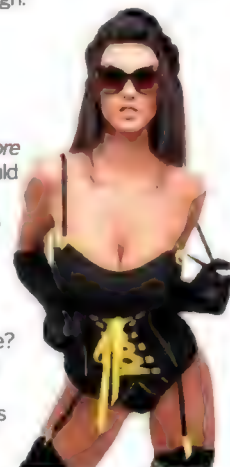


RESIDENT EVIL CHAINSAW

Incredibly, this is an actual, working controller. It's completely impractical, unless your tactic in *Resident Evil 4* is endlessly turning left and hoping the stage somehow completes itself, but the point is all the buttons work. Couldn't cut down a tree, though.

NO MORE HEROES LINGERIE

Imagine if we hadn't put *No More Heroes* here. Would you have known what game it was from? Probably not. Would you care? Probably not. Did creator Bedtime Flirt care? Probably not. Did this sell much? Probably not. Was there any point? Probably not.



ZOMBIES vs COD

Should Resident Evil 6 be scared of Call Of Duty: Black Ops II?



WE'RE USED TO games being delayed – that much is normal. I remember the excruciating wait for *Championship Manager 2* on the Amiga, which would have been the longest I've waited for a game were it not for the fact that *Duke Nukem Forever* actually came out. God, I wish it hadn't.

But we're still not used to the concept of a game being brought forward – especially not when it's a huge, blockbuster release like *Resident Evil 6*. But that's just what's happened, with Capcom changing the initially announced date of 20 November 2012 to more than a month earlier, on 2 October.

It's good. It's great. It means we get to shoot zombies in the face with stupid floppy hair and cannonball biceps earlier than we expected. Nobody with a mind to call their own could have any real problem with that – but anyone with two brain cells to rub together would be remiss not to question why the move forward has been deemed necessary at Capcom HQ.

There will be reasons spouted to the press and public, covering such nonsense as 'wanting to get the experience to fans earlier' and other such hot air. But I think there's a deeper, darker, more Activision-shaped force at work here. *Resident Evil 6* is afraid of *Call Of Duty*, and probably a little bit uneasy around *Medal Of Honor*.

Originally it was set to release around ten days after the traditional launch time for a *Call Of Duty* title, and I think it's fair to assume that Capcom decided this wasn't the best way to approach matters from a sales perspective. Conjecture? Absolutely. Outside the realms of possibility? Absolutely not.

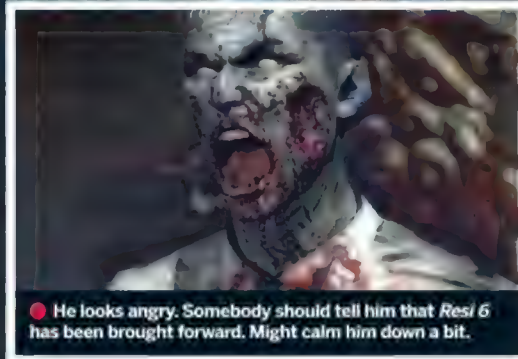
That week-and-a-bit would be firmly within *Call Of Duty*'s strongest sales period – the couple of months following its release and before the gift-giving period is where Activision's monster makes its billions of dollars. To come out in the midst of this, even with a reputation like *Resident Evil*'s, would be a questionable decision.

Or would it be? See, I can't help but feel that maybe the reach – the power – of *COD* is overstated. It sells massively, it has millions of fans across the world, but it sells to a particular group. People who are going to buy it are going to buy it anyway, and Capcom's zombie-ern-up has no say in the matter either way. Surely this means *Resi 6* has nothing to fear? So is *Resi 6* only fearing... fear itself?

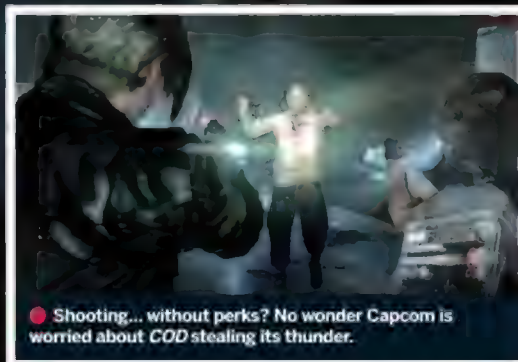
Well, that and *Call Of Duty*, *Medal Of Honor* and – we shouldn't forget – *Assassin's Creed III*, coming 31 October. Moving *Resident Evil 6* forward to the beginning of that same month, where there's little to no major competition and the game will have a few weeks all to itself to rack up some sales – it might still be a fearful reaction, but it's certainly the right decision.



“Resident Evil 6 is afraid of Call Of Duty, and probably a little bit uneasy around Medal Of Honor”



● He looks angry. Somebody should tell him that *Resi 6* has been brought forward. Might calm him down a bit.



● Shooting... without perks? No wonder Capcom is worried about *COD* stealing its thunder.

COULD IT REALLY BE THE LAST OF US?

Based on a real-life fungal infection, we ask science, just how plausible is the outbreak in *The Last Of Us*?

The *Last Of Us*, for those not aware, tells the story of a world ravaged – devastated, destroyed or utterly ruined, we could probably also say – by the outbreak of a fungal infection based on the real-life Cordyceps. This fungus, in reality, only affects insects and effectively turns them into zombies. So why not see what happens when it spreads to people? Why not indeed.

But is this really plausible? There are regular scares trumped up by an overzealous media – swine/bird flu, BSE, foot and mouth and so on – but could we see a world not too far removed from the fictional one of *The Last Of Us*? Rather than speculate, we went straight to Dr Pablo Murcia from the University of Glasgow, an expert in infection and virus research, to find out what he thought was pure fantasy and what could well transpire in this actual world we inhabit.

He explained: “Viruses do not tend to jump such huge barriers, so the proposed scenario is extremely unlikely.” This is, of course, strangely deflating. Still, Dr Murcia went on: “In general, it is easier that viruses jump species but within mammals, if we are talking about viruses that can infect humans. Some viruses like flu can jump from birds to mammals. There are viruses called arboviruses that during their normal cycle have to infect insects and mammals. Examples of these are dengue and West Nile virus.”

Just to be absolutely certain, though, we asked Dr Murcia outright – is it all just a big bunch of impossible nonsense, purely centred in the realms of fantasy?

He assuaged our fears somewhat, stating: “Yes, but this is what games and stories are all about.”

And that’s all of us told.

Credit where it's due

It's impressive, so let's give the doctor his full title right here:

Pablo Murcia, DVM, PhD, MSc
MRC – University of Glasgow Centre
for Virus Research
Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation
College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences
University of Glasgow
Say that three times, fast.

UPCOMING THREATS

What other gaming disasters could we be facing IRL?



Extraterrestrial infection

IN: DEAD SPACE 3

When we encounter alien life, be it in a year or 10,000 years, we're going to have a bad time. At least if their biological infections are in any way capable of being passed on to us. Think what Europeans did to the native populations they discovered and infected in the Americas.



Bioweapon viral infection

IN: RESIDENT EVIL 6

Biological weapons are real, so this is also a plausible situation. How likely it is that an evil corporation working in a research lab with a mansion on top of it purely for the sake of profit will unleash a zombifying infection across an entire town, resulting in the whole community's annihilation, we do not know.



Alien/human hybrids

IN: RESISTANCE: BURNING SKIES

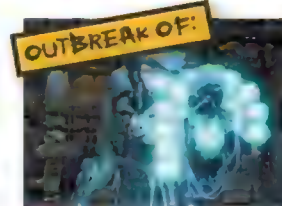
Back to the alien thing: if we encounter them and if they're anything similar to our biology, why wouldn't it be possible to see alien/human hybrids? Why indeed. We'd hope for nice ones, though, that make us better and faster and stuff – not the Chimera. They're just gits.



Psychosis

IN: FAR CRY 3

Seeing as it's real and all, we'd probably say this one is quite likely. Take *Play*, for example. Andy eats Pom Bears louder than any sound known to man, Steve is constantly trolling, Ryan looks like he wants to go to sleep forever and Ian wishes he was dead. It's a matter of time before we go all *Lord Of The Flies* and destroy each other. Team spirit!



Milky blood

IN: METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE

Robo-people running around the world, slashing each other up and being kept going by milky blood: it's the future. Well, it's a future. Though we can't see it as particularly plausible in our current-day spectacles – we'd predict it'll be a different colour robo-blood that keeps us going. Cyan, or magenta.



The Blight

IN: DRAGON AGE III

A bunch of marauding demon-like folks spring up from the underground and ravage the world around them, leaving it in a state of decay when they're done with it thanks to infecting the area with 'The Blight'. Sounds reasonable. Well, except for the fact that it's nonsense that won't ever happen here, but hey.

INSTALL

TOP 5

OVERLOOKED GAMES

Given the alarming statistic that most gamers now only use their PlayStations for Modern Warfare and as a last resort for downloading internet porn – don't deny it – there are plenty of undiscovered gems out there for people to find, including this little lot

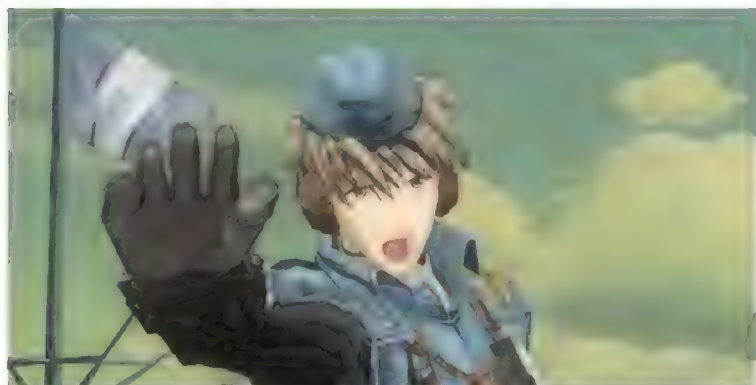
1 EVERYBODY'S GOLF: WORLD TOUR (PS3)

Every year EA pimps out its new version of *Tiger Woods*, telling us how this is the best version ever, how things have changed, how it won't hit you any more. And every year it's nowhere near as good as *Everybody's Golf*, which is both fun and competitive. Buy it.



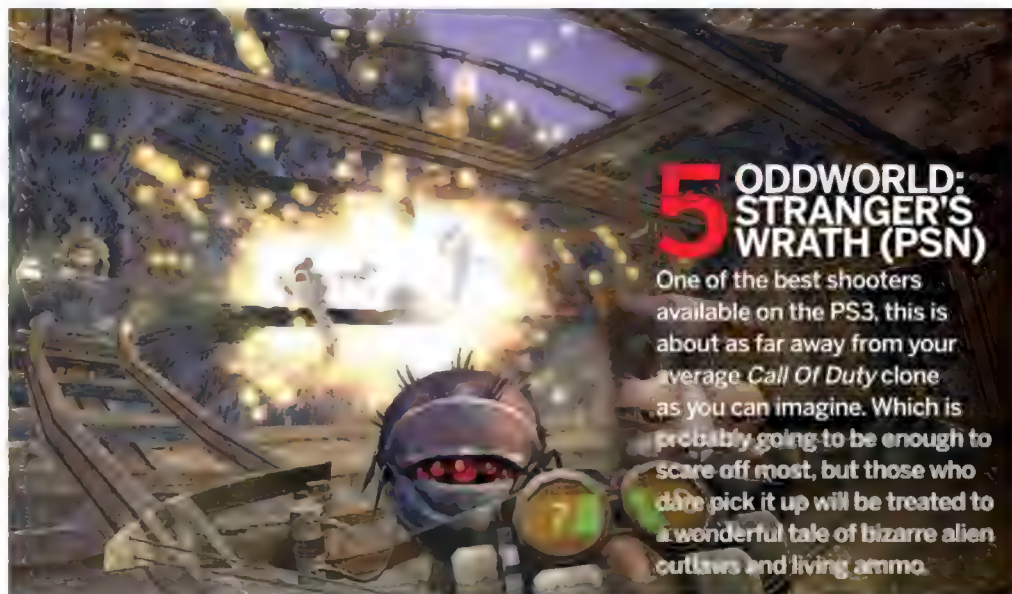
2 DINO CRISIS 2 (US PSN)

We've talked a lot about the original *Dino Crisis* in PSN Retro this month, but this is even better. The *Aliens* to the original's *Alien*, this is one of the best PSone action games available on PSN. Sign up for an American account and do yourself a favour by buying this.



4 VALKYRIA CHRONICLES (PS3)

One of the PS3's best role-playing games, *Valkyria Chronicles* is also probably the best-looking. The attention to detail that has gone into this is astonishing, and it plays well to boot. Give it a try when you're finished with *Call Of Skyrim: Modern BattlePES*. If you don't like it, we'll refund you... in pain dollars.



5 ODDWORLD: STRANGER'S WRATH (PSN)

One of the best shooters available on the PS3, this is about as far away from your average *Call Of Duty* clone as you can imagine. Which is probably going to be enough to scare off most, but those who dare pick it up will be treated to a wonderful tale of bizarre alien outlaws and living ammo.



3 GOD HAND (PSN)

Not overlooked by us, of course; we can't stop banging on about it. It's just that other people, and by that we mean most of you – and other critics, who are obvious cretins – aren't getting on board. Pick this up and appreciate the brilliance; it's by the guy who made *Resident Evil*, people.

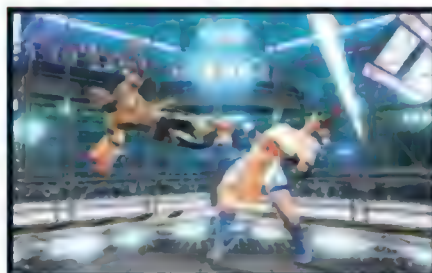
TEAM PICKS

Our favourite overlooked PlayStation classics



STEVE PES 6

Yes, it was massive in its time, but now everyone's moved on to bigger and supposedly better things. But they're not better. Dig this genuine classic back out and see for yourself how good it still is.



RYAN VIRTUA FIGHTER 5: FS

It's only just come out but you're already overlooking it, aren't you? If you like fighting games at all, give it a try, because it's super-tech and then we'll give you Super-Tech Cool Points +5 for manning up and playing it.



IAN RAYMAN ORIGINS

It's getting less overlooked as time passes, which is brilliant, but there's still strong elements of overlooktitude about Raymond and his Origins. It's really brilliant and absolutely beautiful, so buy it. Now.



ANDY SUIKODEN

My favourite JRPG on PlayStation is *Sui...* No, I can't do it. It's *Skyrim*! *Skyrim* is my favourite JRPG and it's not even Japanese. It's also overlooked because some people only bought it once. What's wrong with you?

LittleBigPlanet Karting's SACKBOY

CHARM OFFENSIVE

We've got a rule on *Play* never to describe anything as charming, because only fools and idiots do such a thing. That said, if there was one game we'd break the rule for, it would be *Rayman Origins*. If there were two, it would be *LittleBigPlanet* as well. Despite his terrifying appearance, Sackboy is still an engaging creation.

Also: how can you hate something that can turn into any other character in gaming? Exactly.

Sony mascot, star of the *LittleBigPlanet* series and all-round media darling, Sackboy has proven very useful to Sony over the years. So let's check him out!

SACK IT OFF

Ahh, look at him. Sackboy. Just saying his name fills us with glee. Has there ever been a cuter mascot? Well, yes, probably. But that's not the point. Sackboy captured the hearts and minds of PlayStation owners everywhere with his cheeky smile, zip, and ability to be a blank canvas for players to mess around with. Despite this relatively pleasant exterior, however, inside lurks a dark secret. We're sure of it. What could it be?

HIS FAMOUS GRIN

No one smiles any more: the recession, living in an age where the Tories are in power, and PlayStation 3 still using that absurd download-then-install nonsense. So to see Sackboy grinning like that gives us *The Fear*, but it's nowhere near as bad as it could have been.

In the early days of development, Sackboy was called Yellowhead, and was about as appealing as shooting yourself in the face with a 12-gauge shotgun filled with dog poo. He looked like a demented version of those smiley face pin badges you get. Other designs were just as bad, with Sackboy having wonky legs and red stitching that made him look like Chainsaw Victim Number 3 in any horror movie you care to mention.

Needless to say, we prefer his later iteration.

ZIPPY AND BUNGLED SURGERY

One of Sackboy's most distinctive features is that he's boring as all balls, a cipher for other, more successful characters to be poured onto, or even your own demented, amateur imaginings, if you're totally crazy, which you are.

Another is that he has a large zip down the front of his chest. Why? We don't know. Has he had heart surgery? Does he keep a gun in there? Did he play Duffy in *RoboCop 2*? You know, the guy who gets his chest cavity opened up with a scalpel? We'll never know, but it is disturbing.

As is this quote, on the creation of Sackboy from Media Molecule's blog: "Maybe the place where you go to create is... in yourself. Let's put this zip on Sackboy, he opens the zip, folds in on himself and goes and creates inside himself, because creativity and ideas are all inside you."

Yeah. And you thought we were mental.

FUTURE COSTUMES

KRATOS, SNAKE, OTHER CHARACTERS WE CAN'T REMEMBER NOW – SACKBOY HAS BEEN THEM ALL BUT WHAT OTHERS HAS HE YET TO IMPERSONATE?



MURPHY PENDLETON
SILENT HILL: DOWNPOUR

He has a lot on his mind – namely, the terrible... (spoiler that we don't dare reveal). But imagine if Pendleton was Sackboy! With that grin! That would cheer the grumpy git right up



NAMELESS
JOURNEY

Reasons why Sackboy should dress up as *Journey*'s hero without a name? He'd look good with a scarf. They hate violence. Their floaty jumps feel the same. Because we said so. The last reason is the most important



CATHERINE
CATHERINE

Sackboy has done happy. He's dressed as Zangief. He's looked like Jack Sparrow. He's pretty much done it all. But he's not done seductive yet, has he? That soft fabric, that sexy grin... Oh, Sackboy!



ETHAN MARS
HEAVY RAIN

Imagine how hilarious all the kid-dying and kid-drowning and other travesties in *Heavy Rain* would be if Sackboy was one of the characters involved? Obviously not as funny as the 'Press X to Jason' meme, but still pretty rewarding

You are the controller! But only on these pages





Write in, and win! Every letter we print receives a free game. This month, the sender wins one of three EA games: SSX, Syndicate and Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning. EA has just launched www.facebook.com/EATripleA with celebrity gaming content, so have a look see.

★ STAR LETTER



NOT SO SPECIAL EDITIONS

Reading through the latest mag I realised many of the game boxarts used were taken from special/limited editions. It then struck me, do we really need all these so-called special editions? I myself am a sucker for a limited release (*Hitman: Absolution* and *Darksiders II* special editions pre-ordered and waiting), but does every game need to do it? A special or limited edition should be just that – either limited in quantity or contain something truly unique to that release, not just some shoddy DLC weapon or vehicle, which either ruins the challenge or is underwhelming and pointless. I understand companies want to incentivise gamers to purchase day one and let's not get started on price (How much do they want for *Resi 6*!) but surely day one purchases is where a good marketing campaign and fans of a franchise or genre come in. And why do 'free upgrades' to a limited edition release, making it

the only version available (eg. *The Darkness II*). Doesn't that then make it the standard release? Surely with the amount of so-called special editions pressed the non-special editions become the limited edition as they become the harder version to get?

Your thoughts?

Jamie Ambrose

It's a marketing gimmick that every publisher has latched onto, along with pre-order DLC and the like. Does *Two Worlds II* deserve a special edition? We'd argue no. Then again, if fans of the game are getting it anyway and want to spend more money on extra stuff with it, who can say they're wrong? Enjoy them while they last. Once we switch over to buying all our games digitally, those metal tin cases will be something we all reminisce about in old age while drooling at the TV.

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We take to our Facebook army made up of our nearest and dearest to ask...



Play

What do you think the most important games for PlayStation 3 this year will be?



Like • Comment •

ISKANDER SNOTTOB FORRESTER:

LittleBigPlanet's rip-off of *Mario Kart*, and next year's will be *LittleBigPlanet*'s rip-off of *Halo*.

JAMES BRFC BROWN: New *God Of War*, perhaps? It's hard as you say for PlayStation 3, so exclusives are going to play a major part, as always.

KELLY BRADY: *Resident Evil 6*. *Hitman: Absolution*. *GTA V*. *Max Payne 3*. Okay... how many more wishes do I get?

RAJ AWASTI: *Hitman: Absolution*, *Max Payne 3*, *Far Cry 3*, *Call Of Duty: Black Ops II* and *Assassin's Creed III*. Lots of 3s.

JOSH HEMMING: Gotta say *Black Ops II*. Looks different but looks can be deceiving.

JAMIE CREESE: For me, it has to be *The Last Of Us*, as it looks very good! The world setting reminds me a bit of *Enslaved*, which is brilliant.

CHELLE PARTRIDGE: Seeing as how *BioShock Infinite* has been delayed until 2013, *Borderlands 2* is the game I'm most looking forward to this year, unless *God Of War: Ascension* gets a 2012 release.

PAUL DURIE: *BioSho...* erm. *Tomb Raid...* hmmm. *Black Ops II*. No way that's getting pushed back.



● *God Of War: Ascension* is PS3's big game this year. Right?



SONIC & SEGA ALL-STARS TRANSFORMED: REVEAL TRAILER



ASSASSIN'S CREED III: GAMEPLAY TRAILER



SLEEPING DOGS: COMBAT TRAILER



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You ask us questions, we reply on Twitter, then we reply here so everyone else can see, then you ask us more questions. Join in at @PlayMag_UK! Or don't...

@HOPEGAMING Did you take a picture of yourself in the mirror? #datura #PlayStationEye

Any opportunity to show off our chiselled bodies is an opportunity we'd take. Even if it's just to ourselves. In between mouthfuls of our microwave lasagne for one. While crying

@LOONEYCARTOONY What do you think about Uncharted 3's multiplayer? Personally I prefer Uncharted 2's. I wish they would add more co-op missions.

It's good. That's our definitive, in-depth opinion. It's good. You're right about it needing more co-op missions, but we're mostly just saying that to bolster our 'it's good' opinion.

@CHASETHELIGHT Do you think we'll ever see something from MediEvil again? It's been too long since the PSP revamp of the first game.

We should see something on PS Vita because there's no reason for Sony not to make new MediEvil games. Unless the last one sold six copies.

@ALKOGNIUZZ I want to play Viewtiful Joe on my PS3 in HD! Fix that! Here's the question: Can you do that? Henshin a go-go?

Doubtful, as it never sold many. You can play as him in Marvel vs Capcom 3 and that's HD. That counts. Right?

@METALPAUL1000 Here's a question - in MGS Collection Vita, is it only MGS2 and 3? Is 1 rumoured to be included?

Nope. It'll have Metal Gear and Metal Gear 2 alongside Metal Gear Solid 2 and 3, but those are the creaky old MSX versions. No Metal Gear Solid.

@TRIGGYWIGGY What are you guys most excited about for Medal Of Honor Warfighter?

Erm...

@IRGEI Can you give me a copy of RE: ORC? Because I don't wanna waste much money on that game and it's still not in the bargain bin. No.

@GAMINGGAZ If you could pick ANY retro game to be rebooted and made for PS3, what would it be and why?

Micro Machines. Micro Machines V4 was Play's lunchtime game of choice for almost two years. True story.



@PROTAG22 Who would you choose to helm a reboot of Wu-Tang: Taste The Pain, From Software or Capcom?

It would obviously be From Software. What class would Wu-Tang be? They'd all be pyromancers! (We haven't properly thought the punchline through. Sorry. It's late.)

@TOMBLUE1991 What's Yakuza: Dead Souls like?

We gave it 60% in issue 216. Guns don't work in Yakuza. Sega doesn't really know how to make guns work in Yakuza games. So play the ones without guns!

@XPERIAHUSKY What's your view on Trophy hunting?

It's good. At least until you want a Platinum and you're left finding the last car in L.A. Noire, which suddenly appears while you're checking Facebook, and you're stuck scrambling for the pad as it slowly disappears into the distance.



COMPETITION CORNER

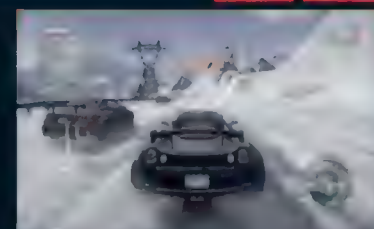
THIS MONTH: RACING GAMES

Hello. Do you like racing games? If you don't, we're not even sure why you're reading this bit. Maybe you're stuck on the toilet and you've read the rest of the magazine. If only this poo would come out! Then you could get on with your life. But no, instead you're stuck in a tiny room with your pants down, squatting in an awkward position, reading about a competition for racing games. Suppose we better tell you about it now you're here. We have a copy of Need For Speed: The Run to give away to one winner. To enter the draw, just get this question right:

WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL NEED FOR SPEED GAME CALLED?

- A) Desires For Tyres
- B) Power For A Dramatic Increase Across A Relatively Short Space Of Time In Miles Per Hour
- C) The Need For Speed

Pop your answer and home address in an email to play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject header 'I was actually reading Play on the bus, I'll have you know'. Closing date is 5 July.





NEW UNCHARTED

The first thing to say is I love your mag and the trailers disc (always fun to watch). I wrote this to talk about sequels in games. I mean some don't need to change like *Final Fantasy* and *GTA* because they are the heart of gaming, but newish games like *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood* was acceptable and showed Ezio's future, but *Revelations* was really pushing it (I liked what you said to Matt Turner saying they were just slideshows, which was true). They introduced multiplayer to *Brotherhood*, which was nice and needed, but *Revelations* was something just to say 'Yes, we're still here.' I'm not saying all aren't good, but it's all about the quantity of sequels. Sometimes the story doesn't add up, like in *Uncharted* there were small mysterious parts, eg. Cutter shooting... uh, sorry, can't remember him, but he said I'm wearing a nancy drew waistcoat big laugh! Back to the point, I don't mind waiting for a game for a while, and it comes out and it's really disappointing. Tell me this email made sense and I didn't ramble on about crap.

Thomas Joyce

We agree with you on all points, Thomas. However, no one on *Play* remembers a character in *Uncharted* who said "I'm wearing a nancy drew waistcoat big laugh!" We'd have given it a higher score if we did.

PLAY: YOUR HEROES

Play saved me. I was about to give up on the *Silent Hill* franchise. *Homecoming* was as ugly and awkward as having sex with your grandmother (same difficulty level too) and the early reviews for *Downpour* weren't good. Fortunately your more positive stance convinced me to pick the game up and thank God/Samhain I did! It's a creepy, nerve-teasing, disturbing return to form. With puzzles! Actual puzzles that require thought and not just turning things clockwise. Thanks to you wise gaming merchants I've experienced the best journey into *Silent Hill* since the second one. Cheers! May all your Trophies be Platinum.

Gordon Mclean

Having never had sex with your grandmother, Gordon, we have no idea how awkward or difficult it is. But either way, you're welcome. *Silent Hill* games have been dodgy of late and it would be a shame if *Downpour* suffered because of it. It is genuinely good and *Silent Hill* fans will love it.

GAMES BY SEGA DON'T MAKE SENSE

I have over 100 games where the story mode makes perfect sense (except *Assassin's Creed*) but when I play games by Sega, I don't understand what is going on. I have completed *Yakuza 4* and still don't understand any of the story mode except if you walk fast, you get beaten up. *Vanquish* and *Bayonetta* are the same. They just don't make any sense, so I was wondering if I am the only one who can't understand them.

Reece Ward

Nope. At least *Sonic* makes sense! Well, sort of.



PLAY-MAG.CO.UK

CAPCOM CHANGING DLC POLICY...

But not just yet. The thorny issue of on-disc DLC has been something very much in Capcom's court recently, with *Street Fighter X Tekken* causing much mirth/outrage, as it was revealed those characters you have to pay to download are already on the disc.

As stated by Christian Svensson, senior vice president at Capcom: "We've been getting several questions, here and elsewhere about the future of on-disc DLC. We would like to assure you that we have been listening to your comments and as such have begun the process of re-evaluating how such additional game content is delivered in the future."

However, this process hasn't begun with *Dragon's Dogma*, as "the decision to include some additional (but not all planned additional) game content for the game on disc was made at the beginning of the game's development cycle".

Yes, on-disc DLC will be present in *Dragon's Dogma*, thus making any and all excuses about the whys and

hows of content being present on the *SFXT* disc null and void. This is a clear decision, made and acted upon. You're being sold a desk with a locked drawer and then being asked an extra tenner for the key to the drawer.

But hey, at least the company is listening, right?



PLAY

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CALL OF DUTY
BLACK OPS II

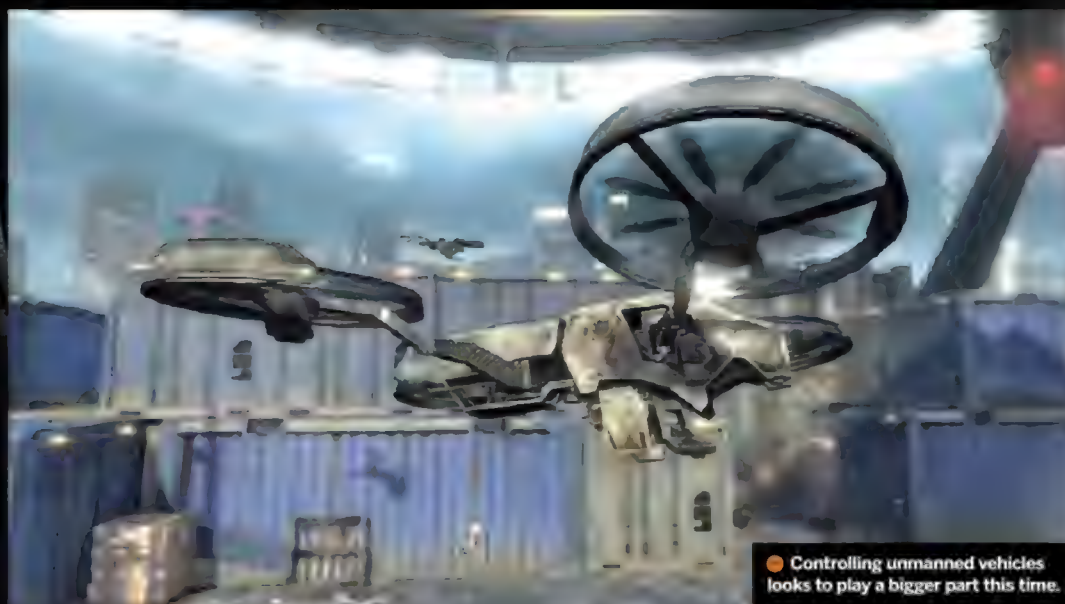
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**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW**

MARK LAMIA
STUDIOHEAD,
TREYARCH

CALL OF DUTY BLACK OPS II

THE SECRET FILES EXPOSED

BLACK OPS II IS HERE! WITH LITTLE ROBOTS. AND OLD MEN. AND HORSES. IF EVER CALL OF DUTY WAS GOING TO CHANGE THE FORMULA, IT'S RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW - AND THIS IS HOW...



● Controlling unmanned vehicles looks to play a bigger part this time.



● You can play Angry Birds on this thing, right?

Black Ops II. How do you react to those words? If you're one of those who hate *Call Of Duty's* dominance over everything gaming, you'll roll your eyes in disdain. If you're one of those still pounding *Modern Warfare 3's* multiplayer, you'll already have this pre-ordered and you're now waiting for the Collector's Super Limited Ultra Giga Mega XX-9000 Edition to be announced. If you're a developer, your sphincter has just shrivelled up in fear, knowing this will crush all in its path. So disdain, routine excitement and fear. Those are the three emotions you always expect with a new *Call Of Duty* announcement. But here's a new one: optimism. Optimism powered by genuine change in the series for the first time since we can remember. Stop doubting. Have faith, Play readers. We can explain *everything*.

Continuing the storyline from its predecessor, *Black Ops II* will be split into significantly different sections. One part is set late in the Cold War, taking place in the Eighties. That much has been confirmed by Treyarch, and history tells us that during that period, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan to support the Marxist government formed by assassinated leader Nur Muhammad Taraki, which prompted strong-arm tactics from the US. We don't know if these real-world events will make it in, as it could be that Treyarch's designers were too busy drawing explosions in their school notepads instead of paying attention during history lessons. This is a series rooted in absurdity, not accuracy. Even so, the Cold War, the time period, the desert and the horseback combat definitely point towards Afghanistan playing a part. Wait, back up. Horseback combat? Yes, horseback combat. More on that later.

SET IN THE YEAR 2025

The second part jumps *Black Ops II* forward to the year 2025, incorporating futuristic technology alongside the traditional lunacy that is *Call Of Duty's* plot. Even Wikipedia can't tell us what will happen in 2025, so this is where Treyarch will use its creativity and *Black Ops* lore to fill in the gaps. China controls 95 per cent of the planet's rare minerals and, being that China isn't America and is therefore almost certainly evil, this is a Very Bad Thing. Cue the return of Frank Woods, having survived both his apparent death and his remarkable resemblance to *Tropic Thunder's* Tugg Speedman, to help sort things out. In case you can't remember, Woods tackled Kravchenko out of a window in *Black Ops* and was presumed dead. Then there was an explosion, just to make sure there was no ambiguity over what happened and no 'Did Woods die?' threads on *Black Ops* forums. And then Hudson, Weaver and Mason all talk about Woods dying, to really make sure players knew he was dead. The only way you wouldn't have thought he was dead by the time *Black Ops* ended was if you were checking Facebook during the cut-scenes. But it doesn't matter, because it turns out Woods is alive anyway!

It's not only the elderly Woods who has lived long enough to enjoy both the spotlight of *Black Ops II* and a life of Werther's Originals and *Cash In The Attic* repeats. Mason is also alive in *Black Ops II*, but this time you'll no longer stand in his shoes. Instead, the job falls to Mason's son, David, who will head up the 2025 segments along with the vaguely human-shaped pile of muscles and tattoos known only as Harper. ➤

PROTOTYPE WEAPONS



THE QUADROTOR

So named because of the four rotors keeping it in the air. An unmanned vehicle with camera and machine gun. Most likely a multiplayer killstreak bonus of sorts too. Notice in the screenshot that when manning the quadrotor, you have the option of issuing squad commands using the shoulder buttons.



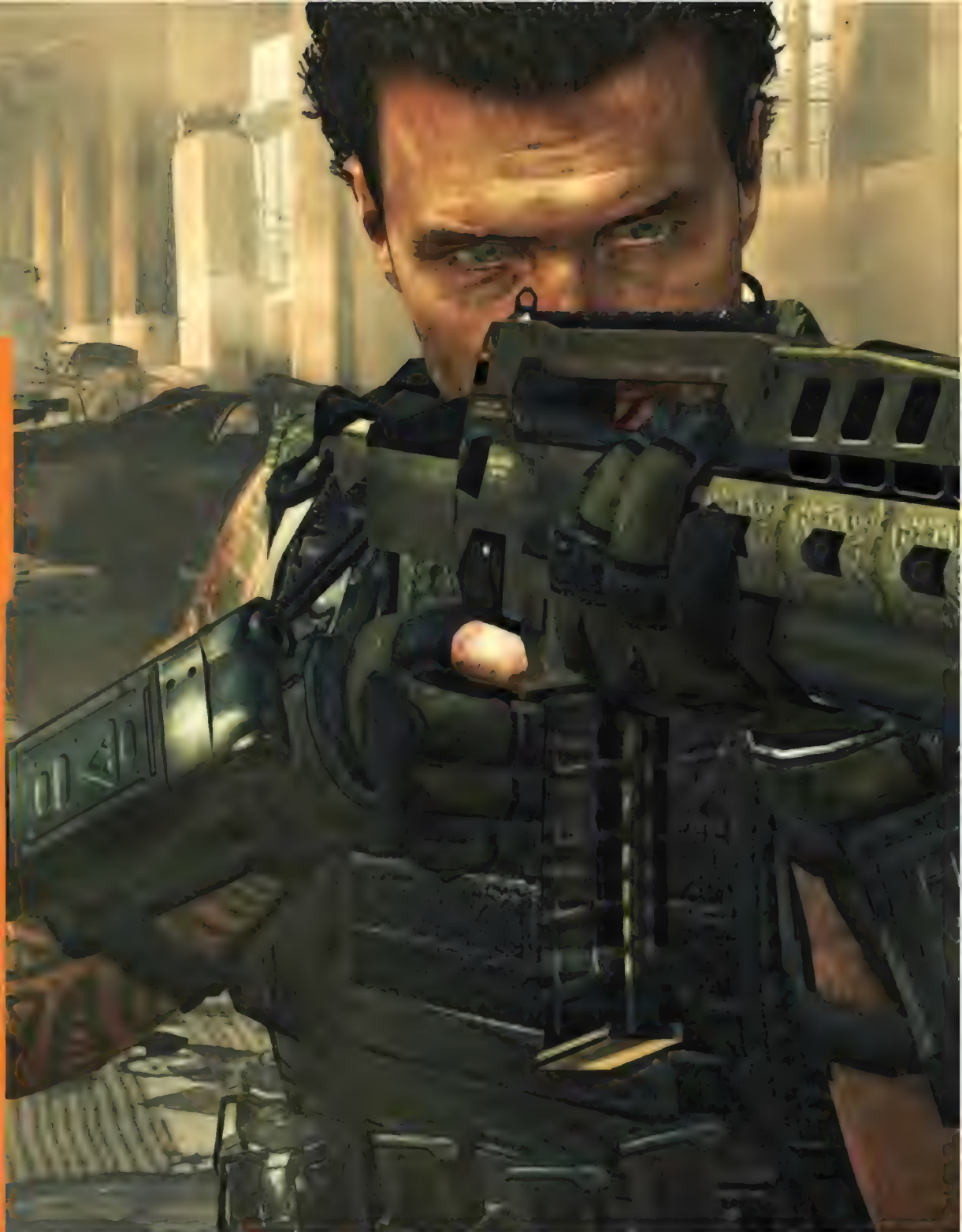
THE CLAW

A little different to what *Street Fighter's* Vega calls a claw, but not much. That was a hand attachment with blades; this is an armoured quadruped with a cannon on the front and a rotating turret on the top, and it can chase after you. Bet the driver doesn't have a mask to protect his good looks, though!



TIJTJET PLANE

Based on current technology, although not actually invented as yet, this is a plane that can take off without a runway. The trailer is rammed with lots of scenes of both drones and planes crashing, so it's likely that there will be one big tiltjet-plane-crashing-into-something set piece.



> The villain? Raul Menendez, who spans both time periods and will bring new shades of grey to the usual 'you're good, he's bad' binary morality that can be found in *Call Of Duty*, thanks to the efforts of *Batman Begins* scribe David Goyer.

"We wanted to create the most compelling villain that *Call Of Duty* has ever seen," Goyer explained. "One minute you will understand where he's coming from, and the next minute you will see him do something that you cannot support in a million years." What about after a million years? Hello? Goyer? Oh.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the story in *Black Ops II* is one that Activision almost seemed to bury on the back of its hype wagon: branching storylines. This is something *Call Of Duty* has yet to tackle, previous games nudging players down a predetermined path packed with rollercoaster set pieces, enormous explosions and limited interactivity. Now, for the first time, we have options on this front. These determine the outcome of the mission you're on and even the overall game, going so far as to decide the fate of certain characters. This is exciting stuff. You can choose how to tackle some of your objectives, while failing missions can divert the story and set events on a new path. *Call Of Duty: Finest Hour*, released on PS2 in 2004, tried multiple paths, but they led to the same outcome. This time it's actually changing the storyline. We'll say it again – this is exciting stuff.



“The villain? Raul Menendez, who spans both time periods and will bring new shades of grey to the usual ‘you’re good, he’s bad’ binary morality that can be found in Call Of Duty”



WHY THE GUNS AND GAMEPLAY WILL BE DIFFERENT

Some of you don't care about story, though. You want guns! Explosions! Gameplay! “Warfare, up until very recently, has been hundreds of guys shooting at each other across a battlefield,” says game director Dave Anthony. “But warfare has been completely redesigned, and 15 years from now...” Either he forgot the point he was making or it's a pause for dramatic effect so you can fill in the blanks.

Unmanned drones. Quadrotors. UAVs. *Call Of Duty* has always dabbled with the idea of remote control – see the chopper gunners, attack helicopters and AC-130s of previous titles – while the trailer features a heavy drone presence right from the outset. Given the evidence, it's easy to picture a game that cranks up the remote control to satisfy the need for futuristic sci-fi tech that our imaginations crave. Or maybe Anthony genuinely forgot what he was going to say.

Treyarch has also taken a page from the Infinity Ward playbook with its rebranding of Spec Ops mode. It's now called Strike Force, and it ties in to the branching storyline. We don't know how, beyond Anthony's word that Strike Force will have >

BLACK OPS II



● When downtown LA looks like this, we're going to assume that Treyarch doesn't know what the term 'cold war' actually means.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW MARK LAMIA STUDIO HEAD, TREYARCH

ARE YOU WORRIED IT'S TOO DIFFERENT TO OTHER COD GAMES?

I wasn't worried about the future setting disengaging players from the franchise; in fact I think people are going to be excited to play an entirely new era. One of the cool things about this game is that it's spanning generations. There's some really interesting things going on and we have warfare that players are already accustomed to with our Eighties setting, which is juxtaposed with this near-future setting. It's interesting from a fiction standpoint, but it's really interesting in gameplay terms and it's opened up all kinds of possibilities with weaponry and AI to play with.

IS THE NEW DIRECTION A REACTION TO THE POTENTIAL STAGNATION OF THE SERIES?

It's really come out of a desire for something new; we've talked about the time frame and generation-spanning gameplay. I think what's interesting about the games we create is how we've moved on from our past games that used history to inspire us, and that's what we wanted with *Black Ops II*. But because, of course, that's history that hasn't been written yet, we had the opportunity to imagine what are the issues of the future and warfare. How can we create a plausible fiction scenario? That's been an interesting challenge and I think this is going to be a unique take on the near-future setting.

HOW WOULD YOU PITCH THIS AS THE BEST COD EVER?

The game has so many awesome situations. Not only is it epic in terms of its setting, the generation-spanning, but we've created this multidimensional villain. We're talking about a character that's been created by David S Goyer, the same guy that created Heath Ledger's Joker, so this is going to be a really intense game. We've used the original *Black Ops* as a starting point on how we tell stories. There are branching stories here, so consequences from what happens while you play the game will have an impact on the story arc.

IS THERE NEW TECH UNDER THE HOOD OF THE ENGINE?

Graphically the team is pushing it, and it's not just about the technology. We have totally reworked our graphics and lighting system, and the game is looking better than ever, but it's also about the art design. We've introduced new techniques that they have been working into the game and visually we want to push the bar. Even introducing the way we tell the story, the zombies team and our multiplayer, which is always pushing things. Suffice to say there's a lot that's going on.

WHAT'S YOUR APPROACH TO MULTIPLAYER IN BLACK OPS II?

Well, I have to be really broad here, but *Black Ops* multiplayer struck a really great balance between gunplay and gameplay. We really enjoyed its guns and we really enjoyed creating distinct locations that had links to the single-player, and we placed a lot of emphasis on these distinct locations as maps. As much as possible, we wanted it to be clear where you were playing and you could say, 'I'm out on the stairwell,' or, 'I'm in the control room,' or wherever – they had distinct characteristics. Logistically, that's interesting for us, but in a gameplay sense balance is still critical and we also like the creative element of *Black Ops* multiplayer. The fact that players are able to create their own personas and show off. That's an interesting element, and giving them tools to use creates an experience players can share. I think our weapons and our balance are going to be unique to *Black Ops II*, so any preconceptions you have about any other weapons in the *Call Of Duty* franchise should be set aside.

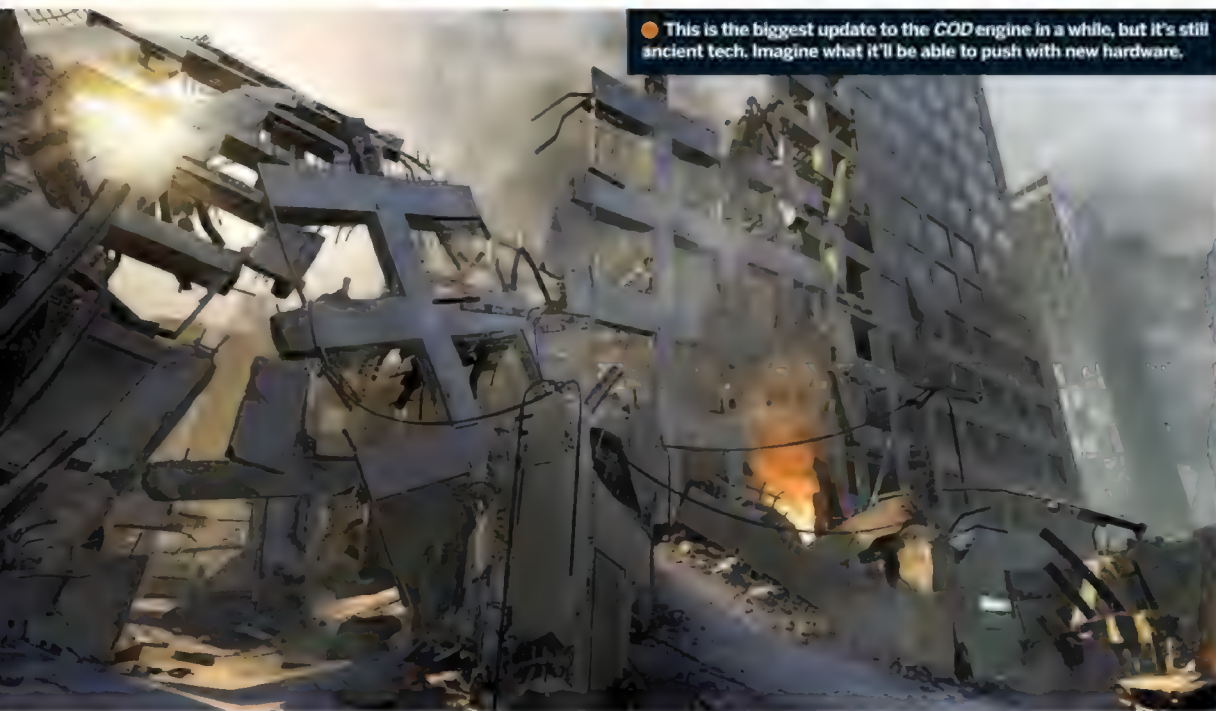


● What will the future bring to gun technology? Transparent magazines. Hell yeah.



“Treyarch has shown it has the balls to be a little bold with gaming's biggest IP”

● This is the biggest update to the COD engine in a while, but it's still ancient tech. Imagine what it'll be able to push with new hardware.



THE BIG QUESTIONS

WHERE IS IT SET?

Yet to be confirmed by Treyarch, although Los Angeles is definitely in the game, as the trailer itself confirms it. Afghanistan is likely to figure due to the Eighties Cold War flashback levels, while Nicaragua and Panama have also been mentioned.

IF ALEX MASON IS BACK, DOES THAT MEAN A LOAD OF WAFFLE ABOUT 'TELL US THE NUMBERS' AGAIN?

Yes and no. We'll supposedly find out more about the notorious numbers riddle that ran through the first *Black Ops* – specifically, more light will be shed on whether Reznov existed or not.

HOW DID FRANK WOODS SURVIVE FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF BLACK OPS?

This will presumably be explained by the man himself during *Black Ops II* but, interestingly, the community was quick to pick up on clues that Woods hadn't necessarily died during *Black Ops* anyway. If you break free from the chair in *Black Ops* menu and type 'cat notex2.txt' into the computer, it'll bring up a note that says: "Mr Mason, Woods is alive and remains the sole remaining American guest at the Hanoi Hilton. Thought you should know." The message is dated 4 July 1978. The final mission of *Black Ops* takes place on 26 February 1968, so the note is confirmation that Woods is alive at least ten years after the events of the first game. So there you go. Just thought you should know.

HOW OLD IS FRANK WOODS IN BLACK OPS II?

Woods was born on 20 March 1930, so he's 95 during the events of *Black Ops II*. It's a bit obvious to point out that he's retired due to his old age but hey, let's point it out anyway: he's retired due to his old age. It's also worth noting that Alex Mason would be 92 and was being hunted by the CIA as of October 1978.

WHAT'S THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE EIGHTIES AND FUTURISTIC GAMEPLAY?

The flashback is supposed to take up a third of the game and will be a bigger factor earlier in the story, while the remaining two thirds belong to the 2025 setting and will constitute the bulk of the latter half of *Black Ops II*.

WHAT ABOUT MULTIPLAYER?

Treyarch is keeping quiet for now. The studio said that multiplayer gets its own reveal and, in fairness, this is in line with the thinking of Activision's marketing campaigns for previous *Call Of Duty* titles. Last year for *Modern Warfare 3*, Activision kept multiplayer under wraps until early September. Expect a similar timeframe for *Black Ops II*, particularly as there is a lot of new single-player content to explain and show off first.

IS IT BLACK OPS II OR BLACK OPS 2?

Officially, *Black Ops II*. Although Activision has set up a Twitter hashtag for #blackops2, and the people over there are the first who will get grumpy if anyone else does the same. But hey – let's blame them! They did it first.

1100

BLACK OPS II



“Strike Force sounds like it's got enough going on to constitute its own satisfyingly meaty mode”

> a “very meaningful influence on how the story progresses”, so it could be a *Mass Effect 3*-style deal in terms of how multiplayer affected progression there, with a total score that could be built up to open extra options for major plot points. Regardless, Strike Force sounds like it's got enough going on to constitute its own satisfyingly meaty mode, even if it turns out not to have significant influence on the story. You can switch between squad members in the mission, and things will play out differently each time, owing to their open nature as much as to Treyarch programming in random respawn points. No confirmation yet on whether it supports co-op.

And yes, there are horses. You'll know this even if you haven't seen the trailer because the internet won't shut up about the horses. “Ha ha, they must be robot horses!” they joke, because part of *Black Ops II* is set in the future, see, and obviously horses can't exist in the future. So in case you haven't seen the horses yet, we're not talking about a few farmyard animals stirring into life when Woods ambles over with a handful of sugar cubes, but rather horses involved in a chase through tight, dusty canyons while their riders dodge bullets and explosions kick dirt into the air.

Now here's what you don't know: the horse is mo-capped. Gasp! Animation lead Adam Rosas has brought in some moving motion-capture performances, such as a wife speaking to her soldier husband over a webcam, mostly as a way to test the animation rig to see if the emotion of the scene would translate to the game itself. Rosas also decided to mo-cap horses. Perhaps not necessarily neighing to their equine partners over a webcam, but certainly for the combat sequences briefly shown in the trailer.

While Treyarch is in full-on gossip mode, spilling secrets like a first-time drunk, the studio even decided to forgo the whole drawn-out will-we-won't-we dance on whether zombies mode will return or not. It will. “If you like zombies, you're going to be really happy with what we're doing with *Black Ops II*,” said Treyarch's main man, Mark Lamia. “It's our biggest, most ambitious zombies effort ever.” Given the scope for all the fun



IN BRIEF

Release Date: 13 November
Developer: Treyarch
Quote: “With *Black Ops II*, Treyarch is pushing the boundaries on every front”
 – Mark Lamia, Treyarch boss

Key Improvements
 Branching storyline, Strike Force, sci-fi setting
Plot: A new cold war breaks out in 2025 as the struggle for Earth's resources between China and the US reaches breaking point, with shadowy figure Raul Menendez pulling the strings from behind the scenes. Frank Woods and Alex Mason return to fill in the plot gaps, while David Mason and Harper take over shooting duties.

sci-fi toys to be crammed in – trundling automated mechs, gun turrets, drones and so on – the potential is certainly there.

MASSIVE VISUAL OVERHAUL

One thing that can't be hidden underneath the glossy sci-fi sheen: that engine is getting old. It was showing its first grey hairs under the sheer weight of *Modern Warfare 3*, and with *Black Ops II*, you have to wonder what will look older by the game's conclusion – Frank Woods or the engine.

Treyarch has plenty of phrases to dazzle us in the hopes that they will ward our inquisitive eyes and cynical minds away from the issue of creaky graphics engine, so here we go. *Black Ops II* will feature HDR lighting, bounce lighting, self-shadowing and reveal mapping. That's the fancy way of saying, ‘It will look rather spiffing, old chap,’ but we need to see the proof before we believe it. That goes double if Treyarch is going to keep everything running at 60 frames per second, as promised. We don't doubt the claim, if only because Activision clung onto that phrase during *Modern Warfare 3*'s marketing as though it was the only lifeboat nearby when the *Battlefield 3* storm approached, but we want to see the promised hyper-detail for ourselves. Or for someone to explain what reveal mapping is.

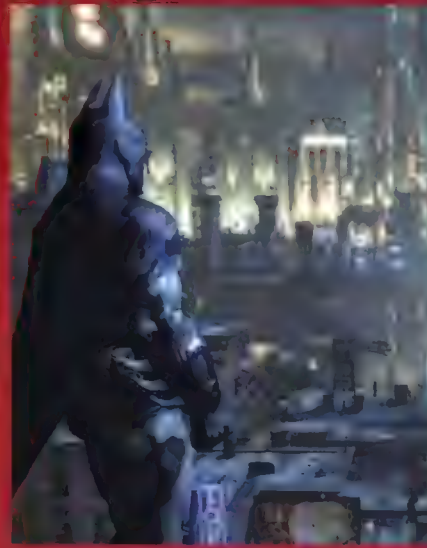
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II will be met by the inevitable scepticism that the series has arguably deserved, following a series of increasingly safe sequels where the only apparent change was to the number of zeroes on the budget. Yet Treyarch has shown it has the balls to be a little bold with gaming's biggest IP. We've got a new setting. We've got branching storylines. We've got horses. Now all we need is confirmation that *Black Ops II* will be special enough to blow the socks off those grumpy cynics. ☒



10 THINGS WE
WANT FROM...

NEXT BATMAN

Harley Quinn's Revenge is the last DLC for *Arkham City*, which is done and dusted following rave reviews, millions of sales and lots of happy Batman fans. What can Rocksteady do with its next Batman outing?



OPEN UP GOTHAM CITY

1 The smart thing about *Arkham City*'s design is how the walled city-within-a-city story element allowed Rocksteady to create something with obvious confines without breaking immersion. Go too far and you'll come up against a wall preventing progress, which fit with the storyline. Technology could have been the obvious restriction for Rocksteady going bigger. With next gen on the horizon, could we see the studio stretching out to Gotham City?



BRING BACK SCARECROW

2 His sequences inducing fear in Batman were some of the best in *Arkham Asylum*, so it was disappointing to see the villain reduced to hidden secrets (mask left on top of girders near the docks) and hints (the locked barge) for the sequel. Yet clues buried within the decoder hide messages that read "You will pay for what you have done to me," "I will return, Batman" and "Fear will tear Gotham to shreds". Ominous signs of Scarecrow's return? Let's hope so.



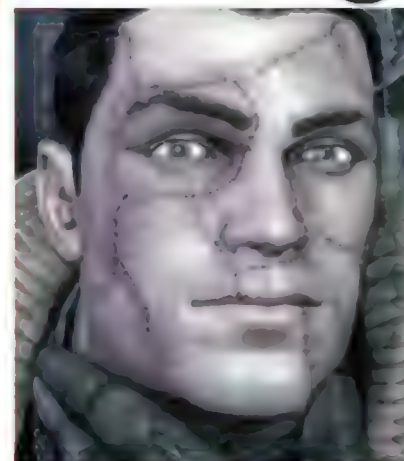
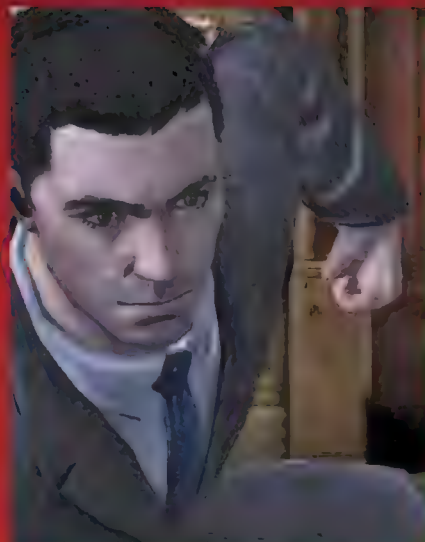
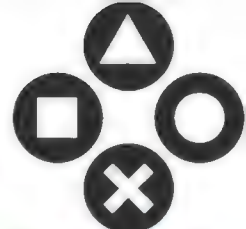
NO JOKER

6 Controversial? Perhaps. But Rocksteady has committed to killing off the Joker, so Rocksteady should stick to it. It'll be easy to use the cop-out of another Lazarus Pit to bring the Clown Prince of Crime back to life, yet there are so many other villains for Rocksteady to draw upon that it shouldn't have to. Bane, Hush and Scarecrow would all work as 'lead' villains without undermining the brave narrative decision to kill off the Joker. Not that comic book characters are known for staying dead, of course...



MORE ATMOSPHERE — A SPOT OF RAIN

7 Forgivable in *Arkham Asylum* yet noticeable in *Arkham City*, particularly when you start sweeping up remaining Riddler Trophies and thus spending more time outdoors, or on some of the more atmospheric touches such as Crime Alley, which are brilliant but could feel even moodier with rain. It doesn't have to chuck it down all the time, yet given how gloomy *Arkham City* is, surely we're due some in the next *Batman* outing?



ADD CUSTOMISATION

3 The idea behind Batman having different pre-order outfits was either pretty cool or utterly cynical, depending on who you asked. We liked the idea, but what about mixing and matching different elements of Batman's outfit? *Batman: Earth One*'s belt with Seventies cape, *Batman Beyond* crotch with Sinestro Corps colour scheme? Maybe bring in other costumes too: Tim Burton's *Batman*, *The Brave And The Bold*, *Gotham City Impostors* and so on.

MORE BRUCE WAYNE MOMENTS

4 *Arkham City* opens with you controlling Bruce Wayne, who is thrown into the walled-off prison as part of Hugo Strange's plot. Bruce fights off Penguin's mob and quickly becomes Batman, and remains so for the rest of the game. But what of sequences where you have to become Bruce Wayne again? Infiltrating parties hosted by Penguin, talking to your WayneTech partners or exploring the Batcave out of costume. This leads us to...

THE BATCAVE

5 It would be hard to integrate into the game without too much back and forth travelling – note how Oracle in *Arkham City* almost serves as a mobile Batcave, helping analyse evidence and solve many of the mysteries while Batman handles the more physical obstacles – but it's a challenge worth exploring. Not just as a one-off location for battles but a fully integrated area you can visit. It's part of *DC Universe Online* so we know it can be done, it's just the gameplay challenge that's tricky.

PROOF THAT THE SEQUEL IS COMING

HUSH REPLACES JOKER

With Joker dead at *Arkham City*'s end and Mark Hamill saying he won't voice the character any more, who will replace him? The answer is Hush, a character tied in with Bruce Wayne's past and last seen 'escaping' *Arkham City*. The 'Identity Theft' side quest ends with Hush performing surgery on himself to look like Bruce Wayne, as he tells Batman: "I can see you have your hands full with *Arkham City*, but it's time for me to leave. Pray we do not meet again. Next time I will not be in such a generous mood." Searching around Hush's hideout, Batman tells Oracle: "He's gone. He's left *Arkham City*. I'll hunt him down tomorrow."

AZRAEL SAYS THEY WILL 'MEET AGAIN'

Completing the 'Mystery Stalker' side quest in *Arkham City* reveals the shadowy figure to be Azrael, who tells Batman: "Dark days are coming, Batman. The prophecy is coming true. You are the warrior who will close the gates of hell. From the ashes of *Arkham*, the fires will rage and *Gotham* will burn. And you, you will burn too." Azrael ends the conversation by telling Batman that "we will meet again".

SCARECROW, KILLER CROC, SOLOMON GRUNDY AT LARGE

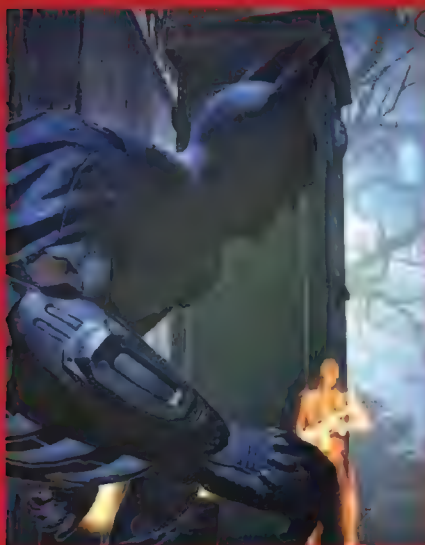
There are plenty of villains who have appeared in both games who could return for a third. Scarecrow was notable by his absence in *Arkham City*, bar the aforementioned Easter eggs, while Killer Croc's role was limited to a cameo in the sewers. Solomon Grundy was defeated in the second game but not dead – scanning his body after beating him shows him in 'Unknown' rather than 'Deceased' condition.

KEVIN CONROY SUITING UP AS BATMAN AGAIN

Batman voice actor Kevin Conroy has said he's working on a new game, which doesn't yet have a name but has a number. This makes it unlikely to be a new game altogether, so what can it be? *Batman: Arkham City 2* as a working title makes the most sense, unless Conroy is referring to work on *Lego Batman 2*...

ARKHAM WORLD REVEALED?

Those who rooted around Joker's den in the steel mill will have found a schematic for *Arkham City* and, next to it, an arrow pointing towards a globe. Then there was a small vignette for the Spike TV Awards that showed Joker reading a script for *Batman: Arkham World*. Rocksteady has since said that it was a joke, but even so...



SHADOWS AND STEALTH

8 Rocksteady did a great job of capturing Batman's fighting style, empowering enemies with guns and armour to ensure you picked them off one by one rather than steaming in with flailing fists. This was achieved by avoiding line of sight – creeping around vents or staying perched above guards. There was no stealth mechanic involving shadows or lighting, something that would enhance the atmosphere and add another dimension to the sneakery.

STREAMLINED GADGETS

9 This is a tricky one to accomplish, as Batman's wide array of gadgets is a big part of his identity. Even so, using gadgets in combat was awkward, and in the same way people argued that there were so many Riddler Trophies that they gave up before they started, the same is true for the gadgets in combat. Either find an easier way of integrating them, switching gadgets like the Line Launcher off during combat, or tone the number of them down.

BRING IN CO-OP PLAY

10 It was strongly rumoured when Catwoman was first sighted in the *Arkham City* build-up and it's the next logical step, given how far Rocksteady has pushed the series. With the likes of *God Of War: Ascension*, *BioShock 2* and *Uncharted 2* adding multiplayer modes to formerly solo experiences, this isn't as alien or unexpected as once might have been assumed. And after all, isn't Batman and Robin one of the classic all-time duos?

THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF ASSASSIN'S CREED III

THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT ASSASSIN'S CREED III? NOPE. THE ONLY WAY YOU COULD IS IF YOU WORK FOR UBISOFT OR IF YOU WORK FOR PLAY. ONE OF THOSE TWO GROUPS IS ABOUT TO TELL YOU ALL THE SECRETS ABOUT THIS SLICK STEALTH-'EM-UP. SEE IF YOU CAN GUESS WHICH



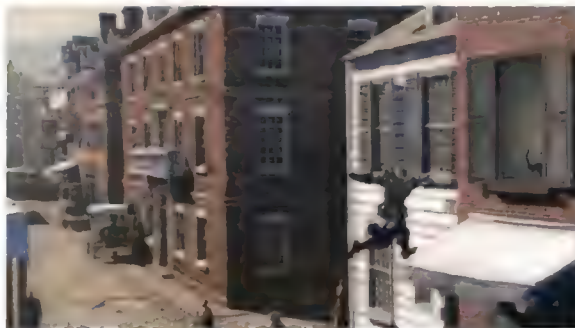
CROWD OF THOUSANDS

Assassin's Creed II, Assassin's Creed Brotherhood and Assassin's Creed Revelations all used the plain ol' vanilla Anvil engine, along with fellow Ubisoft titles *Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands* and *Tom Clancy's Rainbow 6: Patriots*. The engine used for *Assassin's Creed III* is AnvilNext, the next step up from Anvil. Hence the name, we suppose. Like if the next version of Unreal Engine 3 was called UnrealEngine3Better. Anyway, we digress. AnvilNext can deliver crowds of up to 1,000 characters as opposed to a few hundred, while it can also provide a more dynamic game world – entire enemy camps disappearing as *Assassin's Creed III* progresses is the obvious application.



BEARS SETTING 'MAN TRAPS'

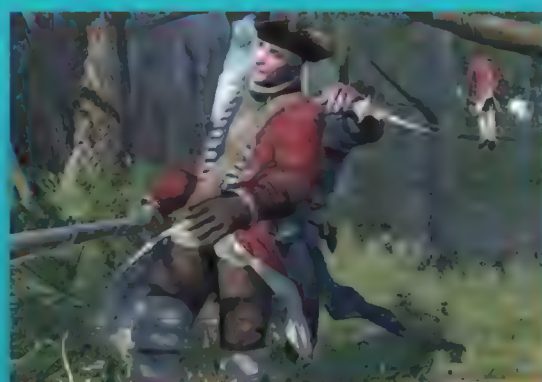
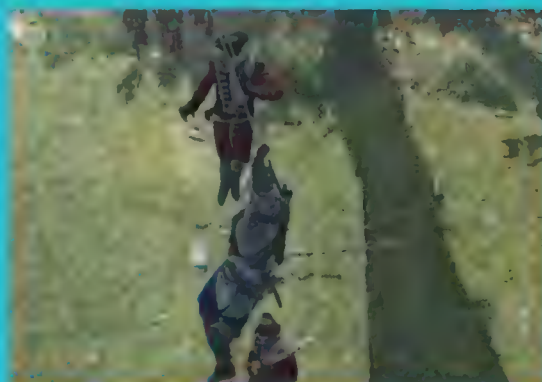
A You've heard of bear traps. If there's anything that will prove how much friction there is between hunter and the beast, it's the fact that we've named a trap after the grizzly bastards. But look! They've turned the tables! In what is a first for any game ever, bears have laid a man trap, using a bloodied corpse as bait and attacking Connor when he investigates. Hunting will be one of the new additions to the series and is definitely en vogue after *Red Dead Redemption's* success. But which side is the bear on? There are some questions even the mighty **Play** is in no position to answer yet.



BREAKING INTO HOUSES

A You'll know by now that there's free-running through houses and there's been some debate over whether it's something you can control or something done via a CGI cut-scene. "On top of the incredibly fluid combat, Connor is generally more agile and deft in his movements, easily able to employ all of the trademark manoeuvres of the Assassin," says Gabe Graziani, community developer on *Assassin's Creed III*. "Now, however, Connor can travel through the trees as effortlessly as he sprints across rooftops and, for the first time in the *Assassin's Creed* series, barrel through open windows, using building interiors to obscure his escape!" So that clears that up, then.

ASSASSIN'S CREED III

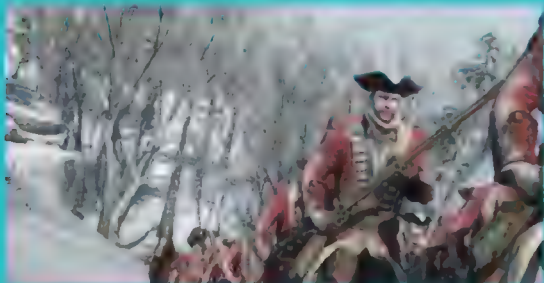


GET OVER HERE – CONTROVERSY AWAITS?

A It'll be interesting to see how Ubisoft handles the standout new move Connor has in his arsenal – hanging soldiers. The treetop combat means Connor can latch onto a soldier with a Scorpion-style hook, drop down, and then pull the soldier up into the air. Better still, you leave the corpse hanging from the trees post-kill, in what could be used to intimidate other soldiers in the area. Yet there's no doubt hanging men from trees is exactly the sort of thing that will draw the ire of tabloids and, given the historical context, Ubisoft has to tread carefully with this move. We don't think it'll let you hang bears either. >

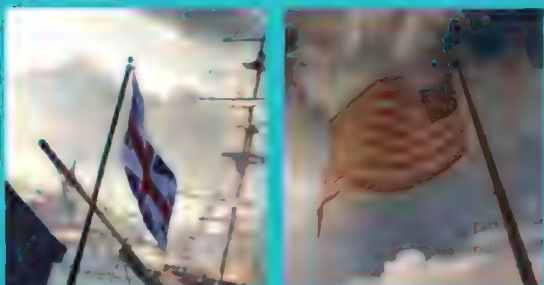
WHO IS THE ENEMY?

A We are! Yes, it looks like us Brits are the troublemakers yet again, as Connor carves his way through a ridiculous number of British Army redcoats. We have more evidence that Connor is happy to slice up Brits as though he's working his way through a hangover fry-up...



EVIDENCE NUMBER 1

Connor says: "Part of me wants to fight and repel all outsiders, the other part of me is the outsider. In the name of liberty, I will fight the enemy, regardless of their allegiance." That's a load of guff that doesn't really mean anything, but Connor "fighting the enemy regardless of their allegiance" means there's nothing to stop him from slaughtering redcoat Brits, as we've already seen him do many, many times.



EVIDENCE NUMBER 2

Union Jack riddled with bullet holes – enemies. United States pre-independence flag without bullet holes – allies? Makes you think...



EVIDENCE NUMBER 3

Technically, if we're going to be really picky, the American Revolutionary War kicked off as Great Britain versus the 13 British colonies in North America, which included Boston, an area seen in the trailer. American colonists formed a Continental Congress and shadow government in each of the 13 colonies while claiming loyalty to the monarch. However, when Americans began gathering weapons in Concord, the Brits sent troops to destroy them, which spurred battles with local militia there. One thing led to another, Congress were declared traitors by royal decree and American colonists responded by declaring the 13 colonies to be independent. Back to the original point – on a technicality, this was Brits (from the British Army) versus Brits (from the British colonies). Stretching, we know, but it's valid!

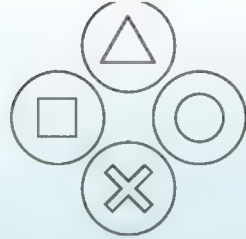


RUNNING ASSASSINATIONS

A This doesn't sound like a huge addition but this could actually be the key to the larger battles in *Assassin's Creed III*. Rather than assassination animations that effectively reset the situation by returning Connor to a neutral stance, you can now break into groups by leading with a running assassination that ends with Connor continuing his run. Theoretically, this could lead to another running assassination. Could you assassinate a group of enemies by taking them all out with a killer combo? It's possible, particularly as we see Connor ending the sequence with a running hit leading to a big, scripted kill on the general of the group.

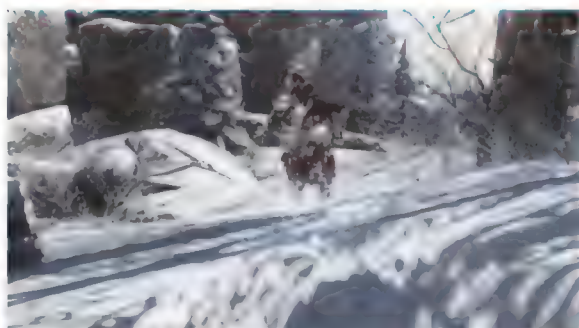
HOW DO YOU FIGHT ARMED SOLDIERS?

A *Assassin's Creed* has traditionally had you facing enemies up close, so how will Connor deal with foes with guns? Will it take the regenerating health route and make you a bullet sponge? Or will everyone be a hilariously bad shot? Neither. Connor has the tools to get around enemies with guns, while they have weaknesses. You can take human shields, and the archaic guns take an age to reload, giving you an opportunity after they miss. It's a tricky tightrope to walk but Ubisoft looks like it's finding the balance between ensuring that enemies remain a threat and making sure you respect how lethal rifles are.



REUSED ASSETS

A *Assassin's Creed III* has been pencilled in for release on 30 October, which means there's roughly five months to go. Think it looks finished now? Have a closer look at the crowds and you'll see some time needs to be spent creating new assets as the same faces and clothes reappear...



WHY YOU CAN'T CHASE SOLDIERS

A The trailer may suggest that you can chase enemies through the snowy forest as part of *Assassin's Creed III*'s gameplay, but watch again – it's really clever editing by Ubisoft. It blends CGI of Connor chasing a soldier with Connor free-running through the treetops. Note that at no point while Connor is in the trees, when the footage is clearly gameplay, can the soldier be spotted. So will there be a gameplay mechanic where soldiers run from Connor? We don't think so. They will react with shock but they won't run from you. ☒

3 REASONS WE LOVE ASSASSIN'S CREED III

MOMENTUM

1 Running across the treetops, sliding through the grass, running assassinations... The emphasis is on fluidity and ensuring that Connor remains in motion at all times. It'll be a refreshing change of pace from the staccato stop-start of previous *Creed* games.

EXCITING SETTING

2 It can't be stated enough how smart a move this is for *Assassin's Creed*. That Connor can be sneaking around with a war breaking out is brilliant, and the setting also means he can rush through both the natural geography of forests and early American architecture.

PLOT WE CARE ABOUT

3 Some loved it, but there's no denying that *Revelations* highlighted how ridiculous the plot was becoming. As soon as you have to introduce a location called Animus Island into your game, you know the sci-fi may have gone beyond a simple assassination concept. In contrast, *Assassin's Creed III*'s plot feels engaging, relevant, interesting.

...AND 3 REASONS WE FEAR IT

SCRIPTING VS GAMEPLAY

1 *Assassin's Creed III* is already stuffed with standout moments that are increasingly ridiculous – chasing soldiers through the forest, free-running through buildings, stand-offs with bears. But how many of these are actual gameplay moments you have full control over?

ASSASSIN'S CREED OVERKILL

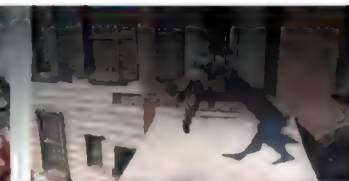
2 There's no doubt this will be a numbered sequel that will justify its title, with Ubisoft having worked on this one behind the scenes since before *Revelations*. Even so, how much *Assassin's Creed* can we put up with? The sour taste of disappointment from *Revelations* is still fresh in our mouths.

SAME OLD PROBLEMS?

3 *Revelations* is where the *Assassin's Creed* series started to stumble following the brilliance of *Assassin's Creed II* and *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, mostly because there weren't enough meaningful innovations to paper over the cracks – the combat mechanics being the main culprit. Has Ubisoft solved the problems or merely disguised them?



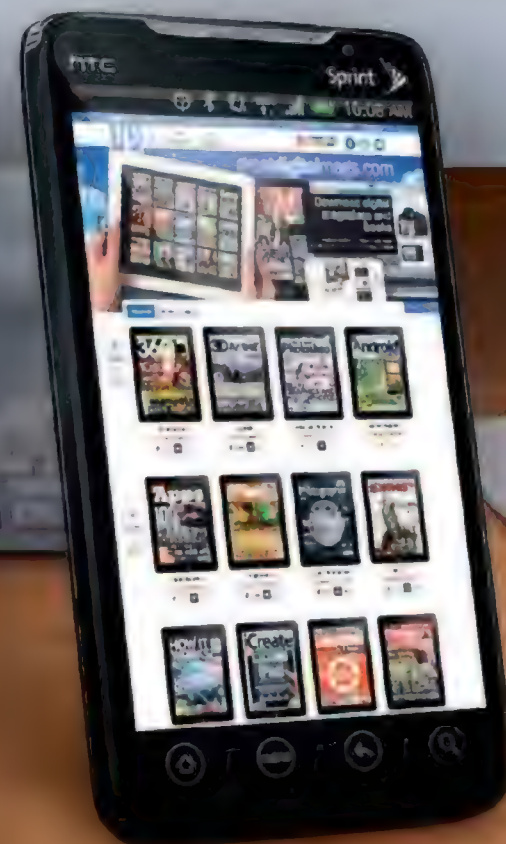
“Connor has the tools to get around enemies with guns. You can take human shields, and the archaic guns take an age to reload, giving you an opportunity after they miss”



BREAKING INTO HOUSES

A You know by now that there's free running through museums and there's been some debate over whether it's something you can do or something you should avoid. On top of that, if you're a fluid sculptor, Conner's generally more open to fluid movement, and he's also able to manage a lot of the business practices of the foundation, and he's got an extremely diverse collection of resources. I think if you've got Conner, you can do it through the front matter, fluidly, as he's been able to realize and get the first time in the Accruals Foundation. I've thought open windows, using building materials, to close up, escape." So that means that up there

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PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



RELEASE DATE: Q4 2012

PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale

Kratos, Fat Princess, Sly Cooper and Parappa walk into a bar...



So. How much should we pretend you know about Nintendo? Obviously you know about *Pokémon*. Even your grandma could pick out Pikachu in an anime-infused line-up and she's the type to nervously poke your HDTV in fear before hiding behind the sofa when a *Killzone 3* explosion lights up the screen. But what about *Mario Kart*? Or *Metroid*? Or, most importantly, *Super Smash Bros*?

Because if you know anything at all about Nintendo's crossover series, you'll no doubt have already felt the pang of familiarity glancing at the screenshots here. The colours are toned down and Kratos now poses where Kirby once stood – Kirby is the one that looks like a testicle, non-Nintendo fans – but there's no denying that Sony has cast its roving eye afar for the inspiration here.

But hey, if you're going somewhere for inspiration, why not go for the best games? And Sony is one of the few publishers with a rich enough history to pull off this crossover character fiesta. The confirmed faces thus far: Fat Princess, Parappa, Sly Cooper,

Twisted Metal's Sweet Tooth, Colonel Radec from *Killzone* and Kratos. An interesting and obvious point to note is that they're all Sony-owned characters, as you'd expect, so the likes of Cole MacGrath, Nariko, Jak, Daxter, Nathan Drake, Gabe Logan and perhaps Nathan Hale wouldn't surprise anyone. What will be more interesting is to see if Sony finds a way of bringing back its two biggest mascots from the PlayStation era – Spyro and Crash Bandicoot. Activision now owns both those characters, so Sony has some interesting legal hoops to jump through to bring them back, although Sony has confirmed that third-party characters will appear. We shall have to wait and see.

Speculating is a big part of the fun – Ratchet! Clank! Sully! Klonoa! – but let's talk about the characters that have been confirmed. The most important thing is how their fighting styles wildly differ. The stumpy-limbed Parappa can only fight at close range, where he uses kung fu moves passed down from the legendary Chop Chop Master Onion – where is he in *All-Stars Brawl*, by the way? Conversely, Colonel Radec

is all guns and gizmos, awful at melee range but lethal at a distance, where his firepower can take effect as he takes pot shots with his sniper rifle. It's a classic close-range versus long-range fight – think Zangief vs Dhalsim but with kung fu and guns.

So nothing like Zangief and Dhalsim at all, thinking about it. Bad example. Plus those two never had to deal with the added threat of the two other on-screen characters, such as Fat Princess or Kratos, crashing the party. Fat Princess is another character who is best up close, but she has the extra advantage of summoning minions to help her out. Wizards fling fireballs so our portly royal can compete from range, even if she lacks the raw damage output of Radec from the same distance, while sword-wielding soldiers can be summoned to distract opponents as she waddles into range. As for Kratos, he's the all-rounder – spears to poke opponents from mid-range, blades to chop up anyone who gets past the spears, shield to block those who manage to find their way past both.

Those after something different could pick Sweet Tooth or Sly Cooper. >



Multiplayer is present, but will the AI still be dog mess?



Parappa can only do damage when up close.



The pace is fast, so the player icons help you keep track of where you are.



TOTAL CONTROL

How to crush Kratos

WE ARE NOT GameFAQs. Hopefully you noticed this by the lack of GameFAQs on the front of the magazine. Even so, we can give you a detailed breakdown of exactly how the controls work, so it'll be like GameFAQs bar the "how do you get da trophies?" and "KARTOS IS CHEAP!!" threads. Character control is D pad or left analogue stick to move and \times to jump. The remaining three face buttons are attacks, which can be modified with directions (left and \triangle does a different move to \triangle on its own). Each time you hit an opponent, you build up AP, which can be spent on a super used to KO an opponent to score a point. Supers are activated with \square , spending all the meter you've earned. There are no health bars, so correct use of supers is the only way to 'win'.

PREVIEW



THE NICHE CHOICES

How Sony could surprise us all...

SIR DANIEL FORTESQUE (MEDIEVIL)

The skeletal knight is perfect for this game, and it would surprise us more if he wasn't in. He has his sword but also other weapons, such as a massive club and crossbow. Most of all, his buoyant, cartoon style already fits *All-Stars Brawl*.



UNNAMED (JOURNEY)

"I'ma choke you out!" roars the hero of *Journey*, whipping his scarf around Kratos's neck and pulling tight as the God of War gasps for air. Shouts of "Journey what! Journey what!" fill the air as its hero floats around, skirt flapping in the wind.



WANDER (SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS)

He's got a sword! He's got a bow! He's got a horse to ride and trample on fools! His level 3 attack is where Wander turns really small, climbs up your back and stabs you in the ear as you try to shake him off.



CHAOS (BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN)

Anyone from *Battle Arena Toshinden*, really. Chaos with his awful haircut and scythe, old man Fo with his Chinese magic and terrible voice acting, the original girl-with-whip character in Sofia... Like we say, anyone from this forgotten series will do.



JENNIFER TATE (PRIMAL)

She'd be a brilliant fit thanks to her four demon forms – Ferai (increased stamina, speed and melee), Undine (underwater form with telepathy), Wrath (distant attacks and timeshift ability) and Djinn (twin energy blades). Bring her back, Sony!



APES (APE ESCAPE)

Could be a small group of apes controlled at the same time, similar to the Ice Climbers duo in the *Smash Bros* series. Special moves? Banana peel traps. Catching opponents with nets. Blinding them with their head-mounted siren.



ETHAN MARS (HEAVY RAIN)

While moping about means Ethan's speed is slow, he has the highest stamina in the game, due to his ability to absorb inhuman amounts of punishment. His level 3 attack is Ethan running around the screen shouting "Jason!", instantly killing everyone he touches.



PS3 EXCLUSIVE



> The former has brutal strength for a simple ground-and-pound style, with the distinctive touch coming in the form of landmines he can drop. This leads to an interesting playing style of dropping mines, then battering the opponent from their other side, slowly hitting them towards the primed explosive. Weirder still is Sly Cooper, who doesn't have the universal ability to block but instead turns invisible, allowing him to sneak around the chaotic map undisturbed. It ties in with his thief lineage, but it also means Sly Cooper players have to approach matches in a completely different fashion, as the inability to block means you have to pick your battles carefully.

One final distinctive touch is the most important. There's an AP bar at the bottom of the screen, which fills up as you land attacks. This grants you three levels of a super attack and, most importantly, it's the only way to score points. Pressing **RB** will unleash your super, and what it is depends on how much meter you've built up. Parappa does a fairly simple spin kick at level 1, while at level 3 he

breaks out "I gotta believe!" which works as a smart bomb attack. Also worthy of note: Sly Cooper bombing enemies from above, Fat Princess riding around on a giant chicken and Sweet Tooth turning into a giant truck, *Transformers*-style, to fire missiles at those standing before him. Our favourite? Colonel Radec flips into FPS mode, as we're treated to *Killzone*-style looking down the barrel of a gun as you rattle machine gun fire onto vulnerable players.

What all this means is the focus of *All-Stars Brawl* is on meter management and keeping a close eye on your AP bar – both your own and those of the other characters, so you know when they're about to become a giant, screen-filling robot threat. Will you harass your opponents with endless level 1 supers or build up for the monstrous level 3? Will you back off from other players with level 3 and hope they waste that meter on the nearest opponents rather than you? Will you team up with other players to stomp on those with more meter?

SuperBot Entertainment recognises that AP management is key to success, and so weapons such

as rocket launchers or the Hedgehog Grenade from *Resistance* can reduce rivals' AP meters. For example, the Spear of Destiny from *God Of War* will fall from the skies on the Hades stage, and if you pierce another player with it, their meter will plummet as AP orbs explode out from their body. Smart. Likewise, some characters can boost their own AP meter with moves – Parappa can summon AP orbs with his boombox, but the downside is that anyone can collect them, so Parappa has to guard it from roving opponents.

All-Stars Brawl is an interesting project. It's a great showcase for Sony to proudly display its history – check the *LittleBigPlanet* Dreamscape map, for example – after Nintendo proved that the concept of crossover fisticuffs works. But can Sony do enough to ensure this goes from 'interesting' to 'Jesus flippin' H Christ this is ESSENTIAL' on the want-o-meter?

SuperBot Entertainment is responsible for this title, and it's its first game. Would you have guessed that its website is found at superbotentertainment.com? Because, oh hey, guess what...

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Sony's characters do battle against each other.
- ❑ Maps inspired by Sony's previous games.
- ❑ One vs one vs one vs one fights.
- ❑ It'll have *Battle Arena Toshinden* characters in! Maybe.

READ ME

Sony's characters do battle in a one vs one vs one vs one brawl, complete with rocket launchers, boomboxes and huge backgrounds.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Tekken Tag Tournament 2

Te-Te-Te-Te-Te-Te-Tek it out



Katsuhiro Harada knows how to make us happy, it seems. *Tekken Tag Tournament 2* – already more than 50 characters deep – might receive new brawlers via DLC in future, but they won't be costing you any extra.

While Harada's *Tekken* did cross over with Yoshinori Ono's *Street Fighter* recently, that doesn't mean the series has become anything like Capcom's 2D competitor. Things are done differently here, and it's not only DLC practices that get our blood pumping – the ten-hit-comboing, chain-throwing, juggle-frenzying collection of the mad, bad, non-human and just plain weird – hi, Yoshimitsu! – characters works as a reminder as to exactly why games are great.

Tekken Tag Tournament 2 works as something of a *Tekken 6.5*, just as the original *Tekken Tag* was a buffer between the third and fourth main entries to the series. But woe

betide anyone who writes it off as a simple stopgap or – dare we say it – bit of filler to distract us for a while. There's a lot going into *TTT2* and, from what we've seen, a lot to get out of it.

The tag system is, unsurprisingly, the main point of interest for the game. Yes, we've seen it in pretty much every fighting game of note from the last few years, but *TTT2* does throw in at least a couple of noteworthy, if not totally original, features to the system. First up is the malleability of fights – it isn't limited to two-on-two, with players able to fight in traditional one-on-one situations and, more interestingly, in handicapped one-on-two matchups. This latter mode is a risk/reward setup, with the single player doing more damage than the duo, but forfeiting the bonuses that come with working as a team – including the more powerful moves.

The other addition of note is 'pair play', which simply means in a two-on-two match each character can be controlled by an individual player. Okay, it doesn't set the world on fire, but it does throw up the chance for even more opportunities to troll vanquished foes – this time as part of a team. Bonus.

But there's content beyond merely being able to switch out which pet bear you're battering a charitable cyber-ninja with, and at least one addition, Fight Lab, is geared towards making *TTT2* approachable for newcomers as well as bloody ridiculous for those with 'mad skills'.

Putting you in control of Combobot – it's a combat robot! – Fight Lab is, on the most basic level, a training mode. But rather than simply following commands and ticking boxes on a list, Combobot will be taking on missions and

tasks – juggles to inflate balloons, sidesteps to avoid objects and so on. You're learning how to play the game, but you might not even notice. As for those more experienced? Well, there's the chance to customise Combobot in a number of ways, including the moves it uses, and this personalised character can then be used in single-player and online to beat opponents into submission on a more personal level.

All this and little mention of what the game itself plays like – and that's because we're still talking about LP, RP, LK, RK *Tekken* here. It's the same format it's been for a long time now, admittedly with the addition of tag/double team moves – some unique to particular teams – but generally the same as we know and love. Unless you don't love it, in which case you're probably better off sticking to other fighters – *Tekken Tag Tournament 2* isn't going to mix up the formula in any huge way to win new fans. But at the same time, it's not like it needs to.

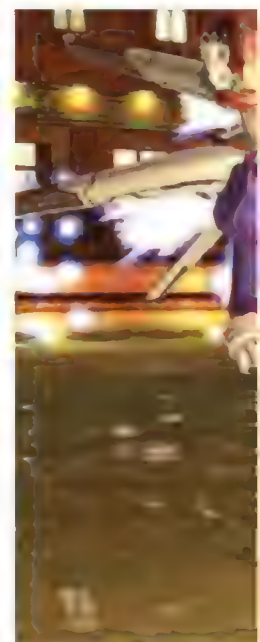
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's almost, nearly, not-quite *Tekken 7*. In a way.
- Combobot and the attached training looks in-depth.
- Covers all the ways to play, both online and off.
- No Capcom-style DLC gouging.

READ ME

The original *Tekken* used Gouraud shading – a now-outdated technique that, frankly, we want to see make a comeback. Not-quite smooth edges for the win!

Tekken Tag Tournament 2 is being developed by Namco. Check out www.tekken.com for more details.





HANDS-ON

● Combat becomes your own personalised character as Fight Lab progresses.



● No sign of the horrible 'are they cheating?' chainsaw arms here.



● Good advice for life there. Happens to us all the time.



Cereful. Hitting him there will trigger an explosion.



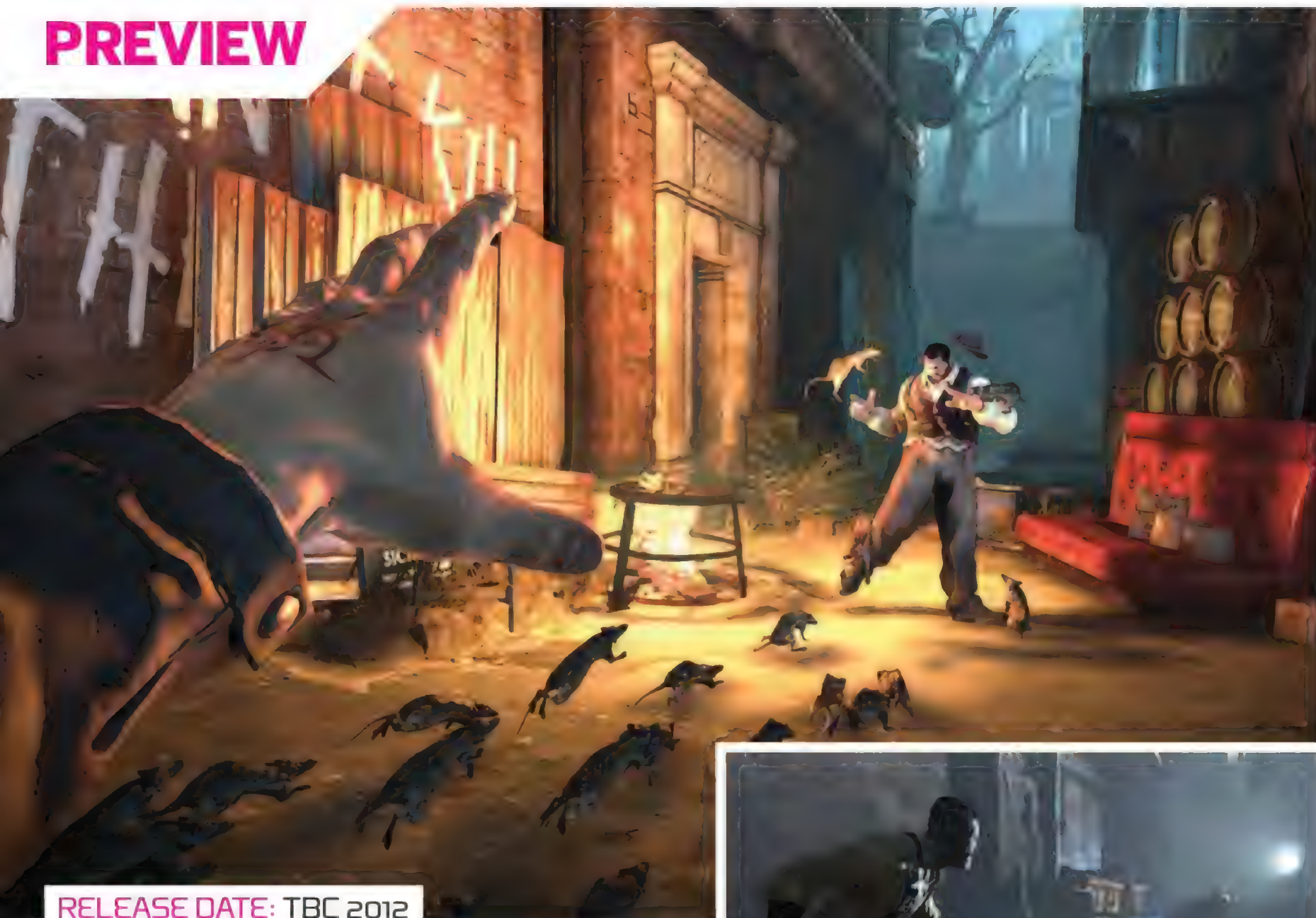
● Oh, we do love you, Kuma.

ONLINE PROBLEMS?

Schmonline problems

WE SHOULDN'T – HOPEFULLY – be looking at dodgy online code issues with *Tekken Tag Tournament 2*. While certain other fighters have been struggling online and, according to Harada himself, *TTT2* has to move five or six times the data of *Street Fighter IV*, Namco is working its backside off to make sure it will all be backed up with a solid online infrastructure. *SoulCalibur V* was a decent jumping-off point, so hopefully we'll be met with something even better than that for our four-player tag matches of doom, where **Play** kicks everyone's arse as King. And sometimes Jack.





RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

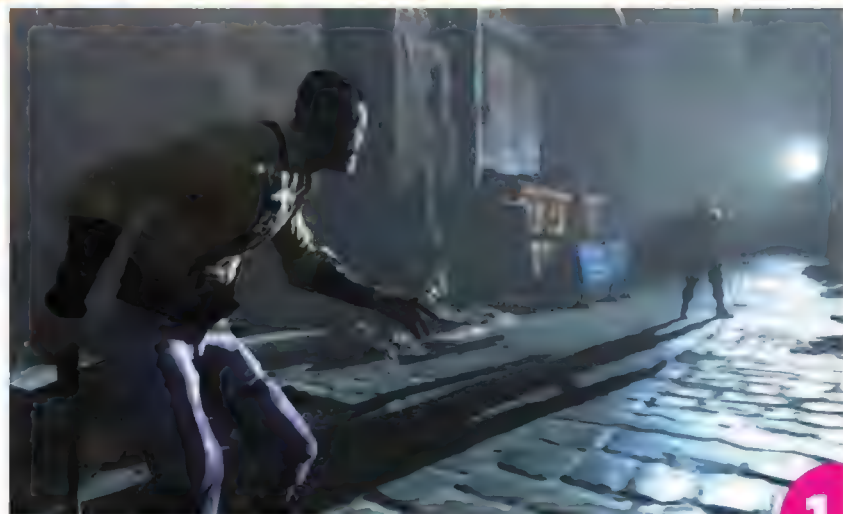
Dishonored

In which honour is an Arkane concept



Oh, hello, immersive science fiction-cum-steampunk world influenced by the likes of *Metropolis* and *Blade Runner*. We've been hoping you'd show up at some point. And what's that? You've brought three proven creative minds with you, as if to hammer home the point that you are something to be paid attention to? Well, if you say so. And what's that you're whispering? You're a vaguely free-form first-person action game with an emphasis on stealth, though you don't make it mandatory, which sees players taking control of a supernatural assassin in an otherworldly approximation of Victorian London? Yeah, okay then. We're down with that.

Dishonored, minus its British 'u', has been quietly sitting on the sidelines for about a year now, waiting politely for gamers to pay attention to it. When that didn't work, a trailer was released. Suddenly, people started to care. And from what we've seen of the game, while it isn't likely to change gaming as we know it or anything like that, there's a fair bit to pay attention to and just as much to get excited about.



1

DUN DUN DUN... WALL

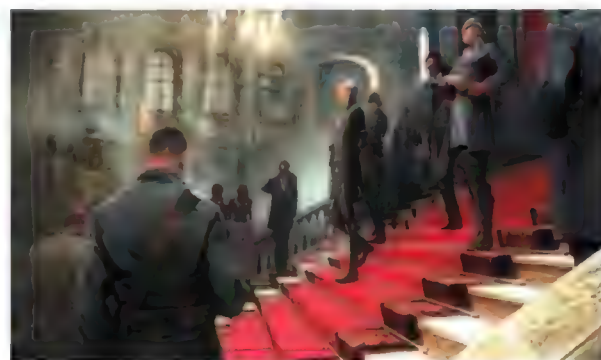
The world of *Dishonored* is at a crossroads, on the verge of opening up into a vast era of exploration and new discoveries. But for now, it's a world centred around 'The Isles' – four different islands lying northwest from the vast, mainly uninhabited Pandysian Continent. The capital of the world, Dunwall, is where *Dishonored* is set, with the city modelled on London of 1665 – Great Plague and all. This is a place where the rats aren't just pests; they're man-killers. But it's also a place where the technology goes far beyond that of the real-world 1665. And as far as we're aware, the main setting isn't the island of Morley, which appears to be named after the suburb of Leeds.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Stealth? Check. Action? Check. Possess a carp? Check.
- A gorgeous and unique art style keeps our eyes a-googly.
- An upgradeable, customisable experience for the player.
- There are some fine creative minds backing it all up.

READ ME

Arkane Studios hasn't had a huge hit yet, though *Arx Fatalis* and *Dark Messiah Of Might And Magic* have something of a cult following.



2

FRAMING DEVICE

Players take control of Corvo Attano, formerly the Empress's bodyguard of some repute. 'Formerly', as he is framed for the murder of his charge and, as players take control of the man, offered the chance to escape and get the revenge he so fiercely craves on those who sent him down. The world that players escape into from prison is one mixing a Victorian-era London with elements of futurism, sci-fi and a heavy dose of steampunk. It's a world that has just discovered a powerful new fuel source in the shape of whale oil. It's a world on the brink of becoming a whole lot bigger through exploration. It's also a world in which you're going to be doing a lot of assassinations.

CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE

The actual mechanics of *Dishonored* take into account numerous elements from games that the lead designers, Harvey Smith (*Deus Ex*, *Thief: Deadly Shadows*) and Raf Colantonio (*Dark Messiah Of Might And Magic*), have worked on over the years. As such, it is an experience that pushes for stealth and allows the player to use it in clever and distinct ways, mixing supernatural powers – stopping time, teleporting, possessing animals and people – with gadgets and weaponry to make it through undetected. Or, if the feeling takes you, you can just go in guns blazing and knives chopping. You're not forced into one over the other, but the developers are keen to point out how in-depth and malleable the stealth system they've created is.

3



4

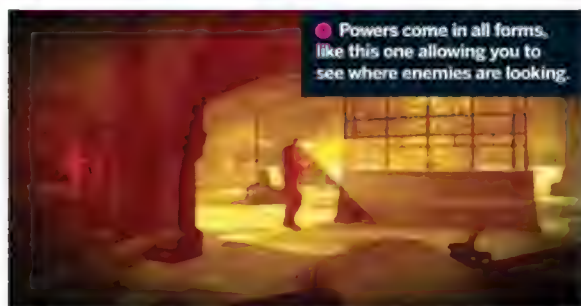
ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Dishonored is home to a distinctive look – it stands out from the crowd of modern mainstream games. And it's not simply down to the neo-Victorian setting, the liberal dose of sci-fi and the general feeling of otherworldliness about the setting that make it stand out. There's an undoubted feeling of *Half-Life 2*'s City 17 to the whole thing, surely thanks in no small part to the influence of Viktor Antonov and the fact that he was the mind behind City 17 in the first place. Then there's the fact that textures feel more painted than photorealistic, that everything is hand-crafted, and that the team is aiming for density and quality over scope. It stands out by being familiar, but by doing things that bit differently.

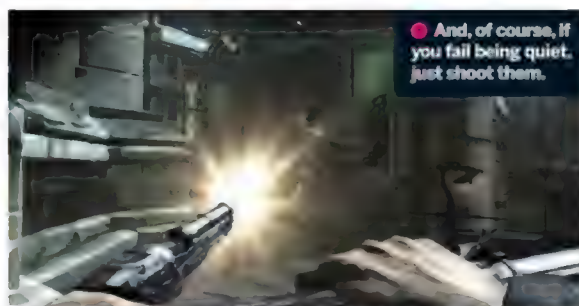


A CLOSER LOOK

Because we've got some more screens to show you



● Powers come in all forms, like this one allowing you to see where enemies are looking.



● And, of course, if you fail being quiet, just shoot them.



● This image highlights the balance between neo-Victorian and sci-fi influences.



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

FIFA 13

Here we go, here we go,
here we go... again



It's new FIFA time! No, not a Euro 2012 tie-in; new new FIFA. FIFA 13. You knew it was coming, right?

Of course. And, as ever, EA is promising that the latest instalment will be the best ever, with new and improved... well, everything. Top of the list seems to be a superior Impact Engine, which is good seeing as although it was good for amusing bugs that made players kiss each other, it was annoying when they somersaulted for no reason. Or you fouled your own team-mates.

Hopefully that'll be cleared up. The last game focused on the awful defending mechanism, and so this one is going to be geared towards attacking. There will be new ways to control and move the ball, and there's also a new free kick system that offers you more choices on both attack and defence. Curiously, there's also a new dribble system that seems to be, if what EA is saying is correct, there to make dribbling more difficult.

This, naturally, sounds rubbish. We've complained about feature-creep like this before, and it seems to be getting worse as the generation wears on. We live in hope that it's just the wording that's a mess and not the dribbling.

On a more positive note, there are also tweaks to the attacking AI, which will see your strikers take up better positions – especially with regard to offside calls – and make more intelligent runs.

All well and good, but is there any chance of the increasingly annoying flaws that have been introduced in recent years being fixed? FIFA 12 was plagued by strength/speed imbalances and the game always scoring the exact same crossed header against you. If developer EA Canada fixes those niggles and implements its new changes well, we'll be very excited indeed. If not, then it'll be the same game with more to go wrong on top of it.

FIFA 13 is being developed by EA Canada. Check it out at EA.com.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- New FIFA...
- ...that it'll be as good as the brilliant FIFA 10
- ...always makes us hope...
- Sounds good, though

READ ME

The Vita version of FIFA is excellent. We'd love to see a new console version of the game that plays as well as that instalment. Do it, EA.



ATTACK ATTACK ATTACK!

With a little help from your friends

EA IS PROMISING a far more attacking sensibility to this year's game, with more intelligent AI to help out with supporting runs. It's a welcome change: short of jacking the tactics meter up to ultra-attacking, it could be difficult in last year's game to get players to push forward. That said, let's hope that the defenders stop automatically stepping up, or it could be a breeze to get in on goal.





● The world's second best footballer promotes the second best football gaming franchise. How appropriate.

RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN 2012

Pro Evolution Soccer 2013

Will PES get a Terry-style knee up the arse?



The inevitable, inexorable march of the football titans continues unabated. First to show its hand in this round is *Pro Evolution Soccer 2013*, Konami's one-time king that has found its credit diminished and reputation dwindling throughout this generation. Once again, we're told this time it will be different and, as if suffering from Stockholm syndrome, once again we really do want to believe it. Bar *FIFA*, we have nothing else. We need *PES 2013* to be good.

The additions we see come in the shape of player control – sorry, *PES FullControl* – which should allow for more player motion, animation and ability, especially with things like ball control. Oh, and manual shooting and passing, which could either be incredible or horrible. 360-degree dribbling is tweaked, while defending looks to be taking a leaf from *FIFA 12*'s polarising system. Then, of course, goalkeepers are improved – meaning less parrying directly to the feet of onrushing attackers.

The second 'thang' is Player ID, which basically boils down to more individual styles for players. Ronaldo runs really weirdly, Terry knees people in the bum, Gerrard is overrated – that sort of thing.

Third and final of the big additions is ProActive AI, which – well, you can probably figure it out. Better goalies; less illogical, stupid or cheaty computer opponents. Sounds both good and necessary, frankly.

So far what we've got is a bunch of buzzwords; meaningless without context and worthless without being backed up with solid in-game mechanics. Konami is listening, that much is clear, and when a developer is as open and honest about addressing problems as the team has been here with *PES 2013*, there's always hope. Because, in case there's any confusion or anything in need of clarification here, we want *PES 2013* to be good. We need it to be good.

PES 2013 is being developed by Konami. Check out www.konami-pes2013.com for more details.



● Player ID will make the virtual players' distinctive styles look closer to their real-life counterparts.

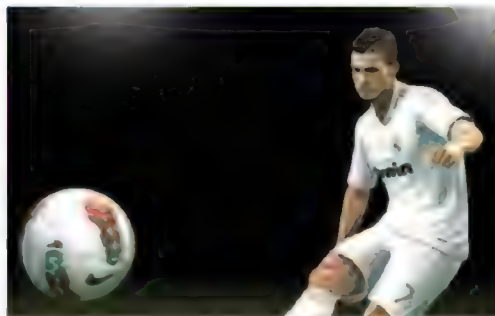


● Rest assured the full game will have more than one player in it.

THE ROGUE FOURTH ELEMENT

Because three isn't enough

AWAY FROM THE in-game mechanics, we get "better connectivity and atmosphere", which, frankly, isn't as catchy as the other ones. What is it? The crowd sounds better, and the game links up more with Facebook and that whole community thing. Can't argue with that.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Lots of changes and tweaks to the formula promised.
- FIFA stumbled last year, so it's time for PES to pounce.
- Though admittedly it is just buzzword mania so far.
- It's football, innit? Football's bloody great.

READ ME

This is the 27th iteration of what originally began as *International Superstar Soccer* to be released on a home PlayStation console. That's a lot.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: JUNE

1

RUSH 'N' ATTACK

New to *The Amazing Spider-Man* is the 'Web-Rush' mechanic. Used for navigating the world and engaging enemies, holding down **R1** will slow time and show various silhouettes of Spidey and what he can do in those contexts in his field of vision. Simply look at where you want to go and release **R1** to acrobatically move there, or take out your enemies in a certain way. If that all seems too involved, you can just tap the button to move around. Beenox is very proud of the idea, but in practice, for navigation at least, it takes away from the thrill of the web-swinging, being a little too automated.

The Amazing Spider-Man

Spider-Man vs Batman?

PS3

With Batman now comfortably perched at the top of the videogame/superhero axis, it's time for everyone else to up their game. For too long superhero games were a load of old cobbles chucked out in a few months to tie in with a movie, but things are looking up.

First Rocksteady showed how it should be done with the two *Arkham* games, and now Canadian developer Beenox is trying to do for Spidey what was done for Bats. **Play** flew out to Quebec to see how the developer has expanded the universe of the movie – it's set after the events of this summer's flick – and attempted to create the greatest *Spider-Man* game ever.

Which shouldn't be too difficult, you would think, but if that's true then why are some of the previous efforts, including Beenox's own *Spider-Man: Edge Of Time*, so poor? Exactly. But times have changed, and we're feeling something other than the nameless dread about a *Spider-Man* game for the first time in a long time.



2

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

If there's one thing every *Spider-Man* game has to get right, it's the web-swinging. Beenox's last Spidey effort, *Edge Of Time*, was dreadful, but it did swinging well, and so does its latest effort. Getting around Manhattan is a joy; holding **R1** deploys the web and sees Parker arc gracefully through the Big Apple,

throwing in a few pleasing backflips and dives as he exits the swing.

It's so good that, as it stands, it's the most impressive element of the game. The physics are weighty yet balletic, and – let's get down to it – it just looks cool. The thing is, can the rest of the game live up to it?

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

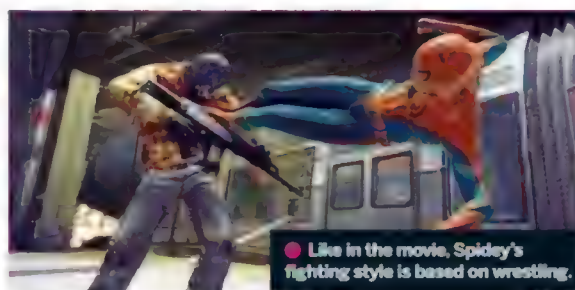
- Good graphics.
- Swinging is ace.
- You can take pictures now.
- It's a *Spider-Man* game that doesn't suck.

READ ME

Key members of Beenox's staff met with the film's production crew to discuss how to make the two projects work in harmony.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCES

The elements that informed Spider-Man's new style?



● Like in the movie, Spidey's fighting style is based on wrestling.



● Characters like Rhino, in keeping with the reboot theme of the film, have new back stories.



COMBAT READY

We'll just come out with it: *The Amazing Spider-Man's* combat system is inspired by *Arkham City*. And by 'inspired by', we mean 'pretty much lifted from'.

We'll have to wait before we judge, but Beenox's take looks to follow the same pattern: you're surrounded by goons, taking them out rhythmically. There's even a spider-sense indicator that looks exactly like the incoming attack UI in the *Batman* games.

But that's fine, because Rocksteady's titles got it right. Beenox claims that all its systems are, yes, built from the ground up, and maybe they are. We're just glad that it's taken heed of the market leader. Smart move.

3



4

MISSION MARKER

One aspect of the game we're slightly worried about is the missions themselves. Dicking around in the skies above Manhattan is already good, but the game will live and die on the strength of its missions, and the ones we played were merely okay.

The first involved responding to a police transmission to intercept a speeding car, which had us leaping between different vehicles to catch up with the perps, before a faintly lame mini-game played out.

Another saw us taking on Rhino, again using a QTE to vault over him as he charged us and then taking him out when he inevitably got stuck in the scenery – think *Batman's* Titans and you're there. Warm-up missions, or a sign of things to come? We're hoping it's the former.



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Hitman: Absolution

I'm the hitman, stand aside. I'm the hitman, I want your life



We're being led on a merry dance by Squeenix and IO Interactive when it comes to the latest in Agent 47's merry adventures in killing people. Where has the tattoo on the back of his head gone? Will he really kill his long-time handler, Diana? And what's going on in the seemingly utopian township of Hope that makes it matter so much to the pre-release hype?

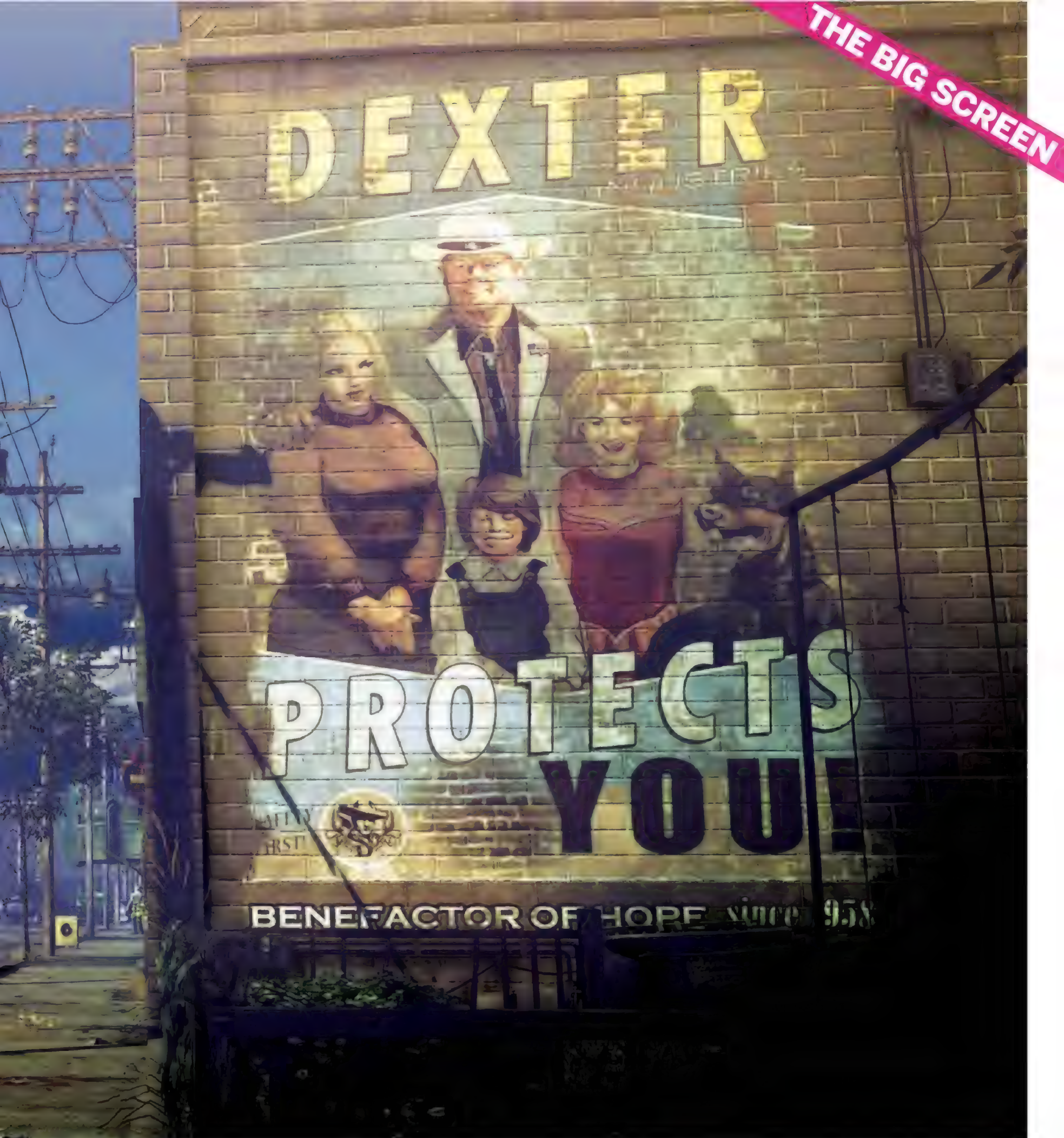
To be fair, if we knew we wouldn't tell you anyway. Still, it's fun to speculate. It seems the quiet little community is under

the watchful eye of one Blake Dexter – providing jobs and general benevolence to the townsfolk at large. Do we trust him? Of course not. He has money, meaning he has to be corrupt. And this spate of 'accidents' in the town? Are they to do with 47, or is it a double bluff actually carried out by the nefarious Dexter? Time will tell. Either way, consider us intrigued.

Hitman: Absolution is being developed by IO Interactive. Check out www.barcode-society.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- More *Hitman* is always going to be a good thing. Unless it's bad.
- It's hard to ignore how ruddy pretty it is.
- We'll admit it: the viral hype is getting us excited.
- Dressing up and conning people is always fun. Good in the game too.



READ ME

Hitman: Blood Money – arguably the best entry in the series – was never released on PS3, meaning we had to put up with the inferior PS2 version.



QUEEN OF OUR HEARTS

Oh wait, that's the other Diana

THEN THERE'S THE Diana situation – some are already sure 47 kills the closest thing he has to a friend in this world. It would be a bold move for IO to make, no doubt. But at the same time, Diana 'killed' 47 in *Blood Money* – maybe our bad guy antihero is merely repaying the favour? Speculation is fun.



RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

The influence of *LittleBigPlanet Karting* is obvious. Or not...

Sleeping Dogs

We wanted words, so we asked Jeff O'Connell, senior producer at United Front Games



Play: How have things changed, moving from Activision to Square Enix?

Jeff O'Connell: On the game itself, we've benefited from design and production assistance from several staff there who've been working on titles like *Just Cause 2* and *Batman: Arkham City*, who really understand what it takes to make a great, fun, open-world experience. We obviously have a sandbox game, but we also have to put very deep action mechanics into that sandbox and practise some more linear experiences. So it's really great to be able to benefit from the experience on both kinds of open-world games.

Play: Is there anything specific that Square London has brought to *Sleeping Dogs*' development?

JO: Because they have worked on these kinds of titles, they really understand the development cycle of an open-world game, and that's because these games are so complex and so system-driven that you need to have patience with the development cycle. I don't want to use a cliché, but it's kind of like a butterfly effect – you change one thing in an open-world game and it ripples throughout the entire game. Square has the experience and the patience to say, 'Yeah, we understand that

you changed an aspect to the fighting and that changed things through the entire game, and now you need to tune it.' And they don't go, 'Oh my god, you just broke it!' or anything like that.

Play: *Sleeping Dogs* has been in development for a long time. How different is it now to what was initially being made?

JO: Working with Square has allowed us to get back to what we always wanted to do. I've been on this title since day one, when we opened our doors here at United Front in the fall of 2007 and shortly after that started working on this game. Myself and the other leads always wanted to make an original IP – we'd envisioned this as an original IP and I think it was a matter of business circumstance that it became *True Crime*. Getting rid of that brand and Square coming in and actually asking us, 'What is it you always envisioned this as? What did you always want to make it?' and then allowing us to

do that and streamline and refocus really brought us back to what we wanted it to be originally.

Play: So would you say that working under the *True Crime* moniker was something of a hindrance?

JO: There were certain expectations around that brand that I felt we were happy to move beyond – I'll just say that.

Play: United Front Games is also working on *LittleBigPlanet Karting*. Is there any crossover or bleedthrough with development?

JO: No, there isn't.

Play: So we're unlikely to see any karting elements to go with the driving in *Sleeping Dogs*, then?

JO: No, no. At the same time, interestingly, a lot of the driving designers on *Sleeping Dogs* worked as partners in prior jobs with the driving designers on *LittleBigPlanet Karting*. So you'll definitely see an easy,

pick-up-and-play driving model in *Sleeping Dogs* that I think hearkens back to the time when these designers worked together – they really get what makes a driving game fun and what you need in terms of the twitch mechanics to make it all work. So I'm sure people might recognise some kind of a similar feel.

Play: Was the game ever cancelled, as in work entirely ceased on it?

JO: No. We kept working on the game even after the cancellation because it didn't take a very long time at all for Square to come into the picture. Really, given all things, it happened quite fast. You get knocked down but you get back up again, and in this case we were able to get back up again very quickly. So it didn't really feel like a restart – more emotionally than practically, probably.

Sleeping Dogs is being developed by United Front Games with a bit of help from Square London. Check out www.sleepingdogs.net for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Even bad open-world games offer some fun. It cannot fail!
- The help of those who worked on *Just Cause 2* and *Arkham City*: invaluable.

- There's still genuine enthusiasm from the team, even after all it's been through.
- It's been in development since 2007-ish, so it's unlikely to be a rush job.

READ ME

We visited United Front back in 2010 when this was still called *True Crime* and published by Activision. Its Vancouver-based office is full of dogs. No lie. Not all of them are sleeping.



THE GTA V QUESTION

Just how much has *GTA V*'s announcement affected *Sleeping Dogs*' development?

"IT'S AN INTERESTING question because it's definitely the 1,000lb elephant in the open-world genre. I feel really good about where we are – I'm sure those guys will be great, but we just looked at it and said: 'Okay, that looks awesome. Let's move on and do what we always wanted to do.'"



RELEASE DATE: TBC

Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2

Snipe my bitch up POW

PS3 Sniping games are like buses. You wait ages for one and then two come along at once! Except they cost more than 80p, they don't have chewing gum stuck to the seats and they won't take you to Boscombe on a rainy Tuesday afternoon.

So they're not really like buses at all, but the point we're making is that *Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2* has some competition, in the form of the recently released *Sniper Elite V2* (52% in issue 218). That was saddled with niggly stealth and psychic AI, but the kills? Good lord they were satisfying, heads smashing apart in an explosion of bone and blood whenever a sniper round came knocking.

If anything, *Ghost Warrior 2* seems to be going for the opposite approach. Line up a headshot and patrolling soldiers will crumple into an undignified heap without buckets of blood sloshing everywhere.

"But **Play!**" you cry, biting your lower lip and with a tear trickling down your cheek. "If the kills aren't blinding me with tides of crimson, why would I bother?" Because this is tilted towards realism, and that's where the satisfaction comes from. Drop distance, breathing, wind, location – everything is a factor that makes sniping more satisfying than gimmicky gore. We would say this approach is more realistic, but given the only thing we've ever fired is a spud gun, we couldn't possibly say.

Most importantly, there seems to be a better game wrapped around the sniping mechanic, which is what should lift this above the irritations and annoyances that held *Sniper Elite V2* back. Stealth plays a big part again, but it feels organic and natural rather than tacked on and frustrating. It's basically proof that City Interactive went to How To Design Stealth Levels School, the linear paths being well-disguised and slicing trial and error out of the equation while remaining generally interesting to play – picking your way through a collapsed library, shuffling under a truck past the guards, and so on.

The big reveal is yet to come with the multiplayer mode, which has the potential to be really interesting. The challenge is how City Interactive solves the problem of everyone camping, but even without that, the single-player here is looking tasty.

Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2 is being developed by City Interactive. Check it out at www.city-interactive.com.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

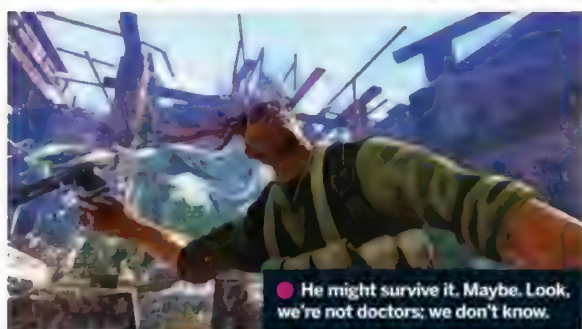
- ☐ Realistic sniping.
- ☐ Strong level design.
- ☐ Stealth that isn't totally annoying.
- ☐ No spud guns included.

READ ME

One new mechanic is you have a spotter, to enhance the realism. Again, we wouldn't know. We don't even snipe in *Battlefield*; we just get in helicopters and fly into buildings by mistake.



Look, he's completely legless! Get it? GET IT?



He might survive it. Maybe. Look, we're not doctors; we don't know.

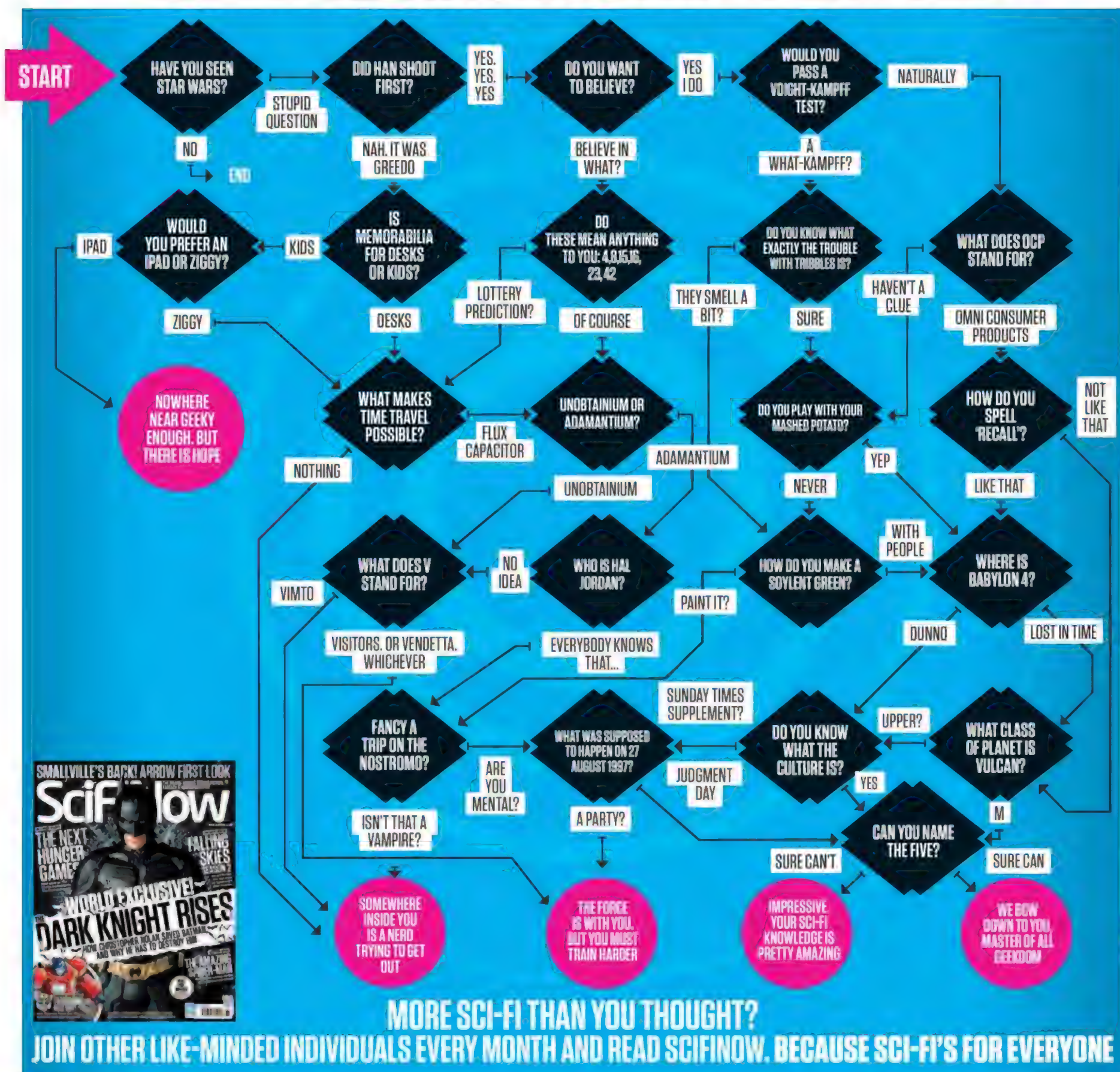
ROUND TWO

Improving on the original

THE ORIGINAL SNIPER: *Ghost Warrior* was glitchy and also undermined its own concept by allowing you to play it as a straight-up FPS, which is why it limped to a low 45% in issue 206.

There were lessons to be learnt and, hopefully, the presence of CryEngine 3 will clear up the glitches and also give this sequel its much-needed visual overhaul.

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THE BIG INTERVIEW

BATTLEFIELD 3 DLC

PRODUCER PATRICK BACH TALKS US THROUGH CLOSE QUARTERS

The biggest thing that strikes us about *Close Quarters* is how unlike *Battlefield* it is. Was that a conscious decision to get away from that and provide something different?

I understand what you're saying; I don't agree, because what we've seen with *Battlefield* is that, back in the days with *Battlefield 1942* and *Battlefield 2*, it was all about the big, open landscapes with lots of vehicles and stuff going on. What we've experienced as we've been experimenting is it's not only about that experience. It's actually a great shooter at its core, from the gun and out, and what we've proved with *Battlefield 3* is that we could have a wider spectrum of experiences in *Battlefield*.

For instance, the whole close-quarter fighting that we have in some of the maps of *Battlefield 3*, such as Operation Metro, proved to a lot of people that hey, wait a minute, *Battlefield* is as much fun just as an infantry game. What we wanted to do with this expansion pack was actually to take that one step further and say if you have *Battlefield* and you do a close-quarters game with the destruction, the teamplay, the tactics and with the guns and gadgets, what would that be? I think when we see this we're proving not only to ourselves but also the audience that this is also *Battlefield* and it's kind of cool.

The new mode reminds us of *Unreal Tournament*'s Domination mode, so it's taking a step back while retaining that forward-thinking attitude...

Yes, and that's exactly what we need. We need to always think about new ways of what can *Battlefield* be, how can we move *Battlefield* forward without destroying the core of it. And that's also



why we're introducing the *Armored Kill* expansion pack at the same time, because we won't want people to shy away from the franchise, saying, 'Oh, they're going all indoors and all infantry fighting and removing the vehicles.' That's not forward-thinking.

We're just proving a point where *Battlefield* can be everything from close-quarter indoors to the huge, open maps with loads of vehicles and the more tactical, slow pace gameplay, but you're still using the *Battlefield* cores. I think that's the brilliance of *Battlefield*.

One of the newest features is rental servers on consoles. Have you found a lot of people have taken that up?

Yes. It's crazy. People are renting all the servers that we get up. We're pacing it so we're releasing more and more servers every day, but every time we release some they're out. So if people are having problems renting a server it's because they're all rented, so we're adding new servers every week.

How do you tackle cheating with rented servers? Is it harder to control on consoles than on PC?

On console it's really, really hard to cheat. It's close to impossible to cheat. When people have some crazy network lag you can see that's cheating but there's not really any cheats going on console – that we know about, at least. On PC it's worse, because there's so many things you can do with your PC that we can't control. So the only way for us to deal with it is bring in the reports, try to find the problems and patch it.

You recently released a huge patch. We're sure you're aware that there have been a few issues with it, but looking at various forums, it seems to be that as much criticism as there is, there seems to be just as much praise. How do you know what to fix and what to leave?

The biggest challenge when you release a big patch like this is to wait. Because we know that if you have a favourite gun that we have balanced down or you score in a certain way by doing certain things and then we nerfed that down then you will get upset, period.

People do not care and they do not know about the big picture, but we do. Because we don't care about single

individuals, we care about everyone. We try to make sure that everyone has a great time and that the balance is over-arching.

So we have a lot of statistics. We look at all the data and we try to listen to people and ask: 'Is this really an issue?' And in most of the cases it is not an issue. There are two big things that we're doing right now. We're evaluating all the feedback we're getting to see if something is a problem or if it's just someone thinking, 'I'm not used to it, so I hate it. You just ruined my game, therefore I hate you.' Which you get a lot.

The other thing is to let it sink in. So people keep playing for a while and they say, 'Oh, okay, now I get it.' And, as you say, we get a lot of praise for it but the biggest problem is that the people that like it don't go on forums and write about it; they just keep playing.

We can see that our player numbers are going up as we speak because of the patch. It's not going down even though people say, 'I'm not playing because of the patch.' So we can say people are playing thanks to the patch and now it's better – it's better balanced, we've fixed a lot of things, there's a lot of cool, small things that no one really gets because it's just there.

And I think if people went back to the old patch now after a couple of weeks they would see the big differences. But then again it's not that it's hassle-free, so of course we are looking into any real issues that we need to fix.

Like the M26 with MASS?
Yes, that's one of them.

Will that be the first to go?
We'll see. [laughs]

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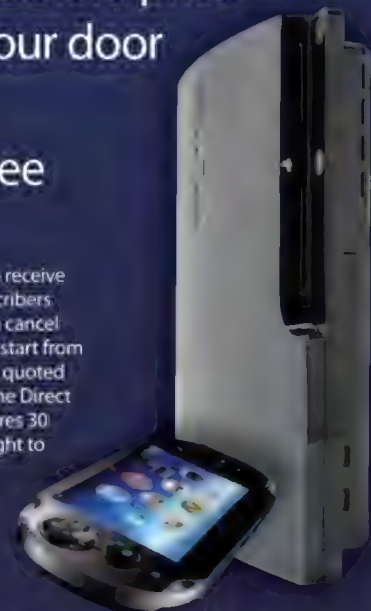
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REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Max Payne 3

Return of the Max?

PS3

After nine years, a lot of grumbling about baldness and Brazil, and roughly 9 trillion promo vids telling us how shooting works – not to mention a terrible movie in among all that – *Max Payne 3* is finally, definitively here. And, for the first three hours or so, the game will have you caught in its grasp tighter than Max holds a Beretta.

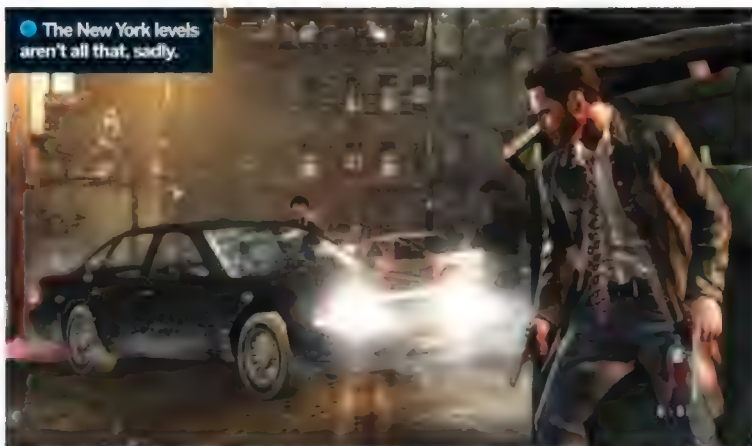
The opening cut-scene – one of many, many more, which is something we'll get to in a moment – is a lovely introduction to the continuing misadventures of everyone's favourite alcoholic/murderer/junkie loveable rogue. New York has been cast aside after yet more bad business with the locals, at this point replaced – to be returned to sporadically as the game's narrative leaps about like the man himself – with the seductive neon and lush sunshine of Sao Paulo's nightclubs and high society.

This being Max Payne, the man who turns any surrounding area into a place with a worse K/D ratio than Thermopylae, it's not long until the shooting begins. It never really stops. Rockstar's efforts on the graphical front are matched only by the excellent animation; whether strutting through a party or frantically cradling a shotgun up to his armpit so he can reload a pistol, Payne certainly looks and acts the part.



DETAILS

Publisher
Rockstar
Developer
Rockstar Studios
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Shooter
Age Rating
18
Website
rockstargames.com
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● The New York levels aren't all that, sadly.



● Armoured enemies are a pain in the ass.

For these opening few hours, Rockstar's aesthetic prowess combines with the basic appeal of slow-motion shooting to create what seems to be the best game ever. A shootout in a nightclub demonstrates all that's good about bullet time – vaulting around cover in slow motion to pick off a goon with a headshot, diving behind a bar, firing wildly at multiple assailants as glass smashes, wood splinters and shell casings echo is wonderful. When Payne grabs an enemy and forces them out of the VIP window, falling in enforced slow-mo – one of the game's new touches – to the dance floor below, there will be a part of your brain that goes: 'Yeah. That's what I've been waiting for.'

It's not long, however, until flaws start creeping in, and the longer you play the more apparent they become because, in a purely mechanical sense, the game doesn't have that much to offer.

This wouldn't be too much of an issue if the elements that surrounded it – namely the story or the level design – were better than they are. After all, the thrill of a perfect slow-mo headshot doesn't really diminish; it's merely cheapened by what surrounds it, and the game falls down here.

One of the key problems that *Max Payne 3* has is that it's punishingly hard, even on easy, which kind of takes away from the fantasy of all-out badassery. Before release Rockstar was keen to calm complaints about the introduction of a cover system, but you'll be using it a lot as you're just so vulnerable, even in bullet time.

In *Max Payne 2*, you gradually became faster and more lethal the more kills you racked up in one BT session, really amping the feeling of being an unstoppable force that would make John Woo proud. No such mechanic exists here, and so it makes more sense, with your low resistance, to move from cover to cover in slow



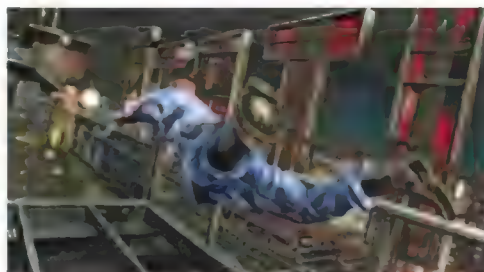
● This is the least gory headshot we've yet seen in *Max Payne 3*.

motion. *Max Payne* is about taking risks to look cool, which is your well-deserved reward. For the most part you can't get away with that here, so why take the risk?

It's a shame, one compounded by the design of the stages themselves, and the cut-scenes that frequently, aggravatingly interrupt them. Opening any door seems to trigger a cut-scene, and as the game progresses they become more and more like eloquent demarcations of new kill rooms than narrative checkpoints. The settings are varied and, one dreadfully dull boatyard aside, fairly engaging, but, again, they all play out in the same way. Fun at first, but gradually more and more irritating.

Speaking of the story, while we're not saying it's terrible – it's actually pretty good, being shocking in places yet very, very funny – there's just something missing from it, affecting the game overall. The previous entries played out as almost straight-faced spoofs and, as such, drove you through because, well, anything could happen next. Norse gods, secret societies, amusing self-references out the wazoo and almost a surreal quality – the TV show that





Can Rockstar make multiplayer work?

[illegible]

The authors thank the reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.



Steve Burns

Moments of glory clash with irritating, baffling design decisions to ensure that *Max Payne 3* isn't quite the sequel we all hoped for. Brilliant in places, utterly frustrating in others.

77%

77%



Previously... in Play



Issue 216 "Payne will satisfy our demand for gunishment to the bitter end. The question is whether it will do more than that."

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Resistance: Burning Skies

More like Massive Sighs



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Nihilistic Software
Price
£39.99
Players
1-8
Genre
First-person shooter
Age Rating
16+
Website
bit.ly/J32SGv
Twitter
@NihilisticInc



We will admit to having approached last year's *Resistance 3* with some amount of trepidation after the disappointing second instalment. We were wrong. It was a fine game and easily the best in the series – a fitting send-off to what may well be over, at least on PS3. As a result of this turnabout of fortunes, we were more receptive to the charms that *Resistance: Burning Skies* – the first proper first-party FPS on Vita – could offer.

Yep, we were stupid to be lured into this one. *Burning Skies* is a masterclass in dullness, frustration, lack of imagination and just generally not being a lot of fun. At all.

Let's be nice, though. *Burning Skies* gives us hope – and this is a good thing – because it shows what we can expect from the Vita in future. It's a *proper* game, whatever that means, and a sign that in the future we'll get some truly brilliant, no-compromise experiences on the handheld.

For that reason, for tantalising our game-shaped tastebuds for a future that could well be realised far sooner than anyone thinks, *Resistance* gets a big tick.

But you'll notice said tick isn't for being a good game. Because it just isn't. So it doesn't deserve it. And we have to stop being nice, much as it hurts the feelings of message boards

the world over. We have to move on to the more negative points because *Resistance: Burning Skies* is unfortunately dominated by them.

The best we can say for the game is that you might cruise through, to a point, without paying it much heed. At its best it's utterly mediocre; inoffensive and bland to the nth degree, playing out like any other first-person shooter you've forgotten about in the last ten years. Walk through a corridor, reach an open area, have a shootout with a group of enemies who come in nice, orderly waves and tend to stick to the same class types, lest you get too confused about who you're fighting and what guns they're shooting, then move on, rinse and repeat for a few hours.

It's functional. It controls well enough. Some touch implementation is clumsy – trying to activate a door by tapping the screen turns into accidentally firing a grenade from your gun at the wall a metre from your face – but generally

"Resistance: Burning Skies isn't the worst FPS you'll ever play. It just isn't a good one."

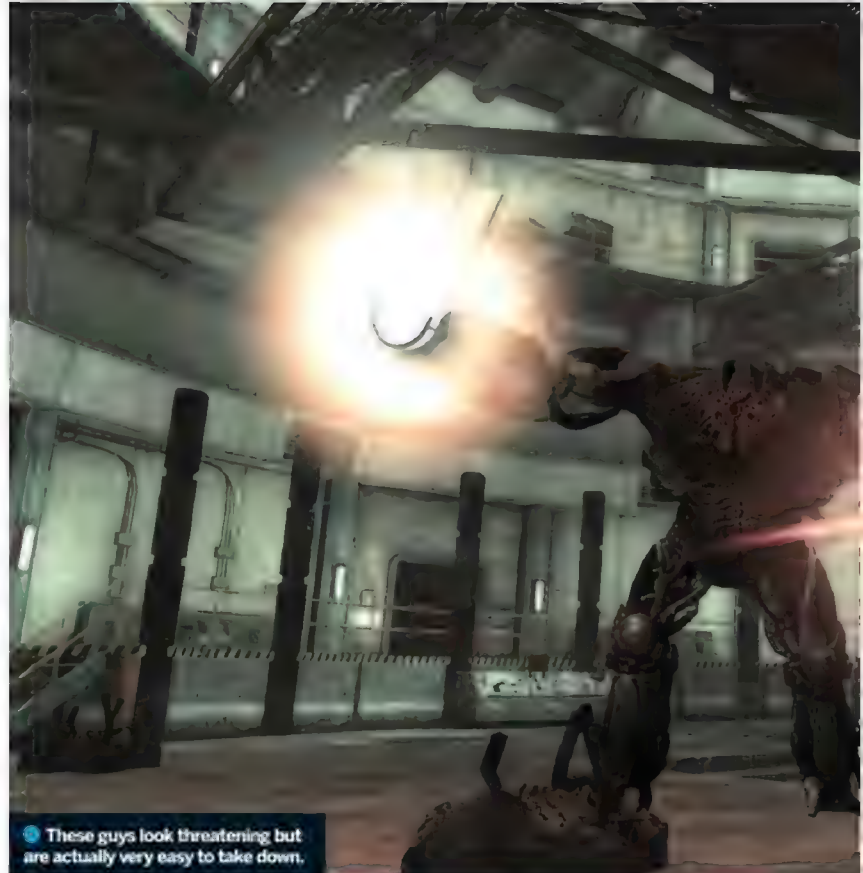
speaking it's fine. See? We're trying to be nice again. It isn't working.

But it falls apart with a clumsy cover system that allows you to be almost invulnerable while shooting at enemies who have a clear sight of you. It falls apart with AI that tracks your movements perfectly at all times; the snipers

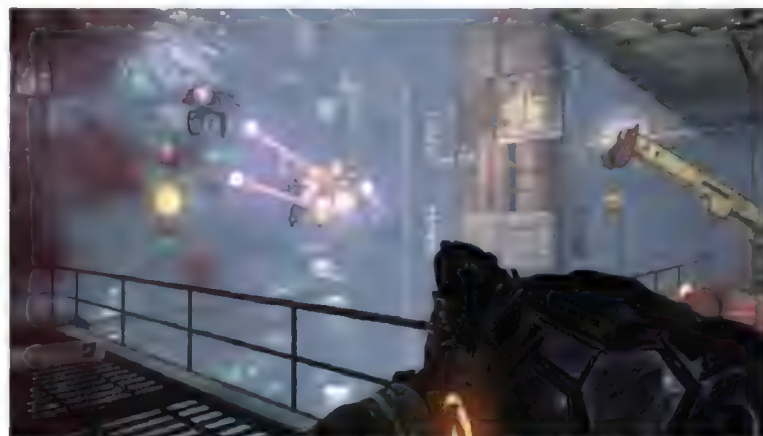
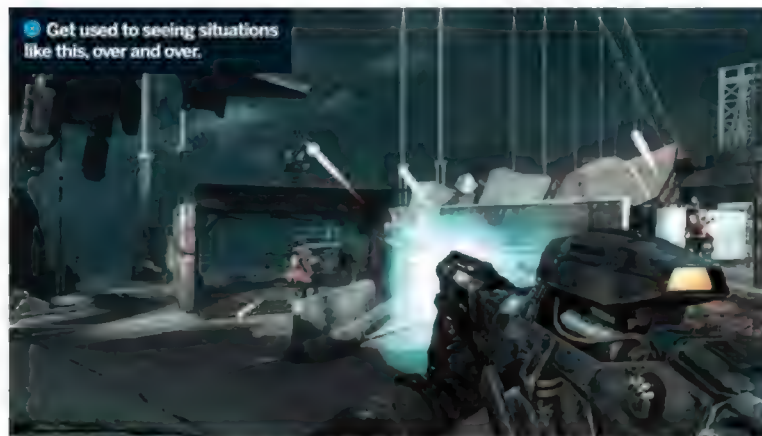
will hit you as soon as you come out of cover. It falls apart with a total lack of imagination in encounters; it's just a collection of different-looking rooms with a load of enemies running at you from the front. If it were *Serious Sam*, where it was designed around a mechanic, we could accept it. But it's not. When a boss fight gives you a classic huge room full of ammo and weapons, and you kill the blighter before you've even had to take a step – rocket launcher at the explosive thing next to him – there's something wrong on a fundamental level.

And the less said about the absolutely obnoxious final battle, the better. Hold your tears, fanboys, because here's some whining about difficulty: it's all wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong. It doesn't favour skill so much as it does the mindless blunderbuss approach of 'just shoot and you might win'. It's hard to go into detail without spoiling it for those who can be bothered, but safe to say it doesn't teeter on the brink of unfairness; it jumps headfirst into the pit of pisstake. One-hit kills, destructible cover, attacks that hit regardless of where you are, and a window to inflict damage on a fast-moving target that can be measured in hundredths of a second... Just no. Especially as it's so at odds with most of what comes before.

Resistance: Burning Skies isn't the worst FPS you'll ever play. It just isn't a particularly good one. It's boring to the point of being insulting. In a series that prides itself on, at



These guys look threatening but are actually very easy to take down.

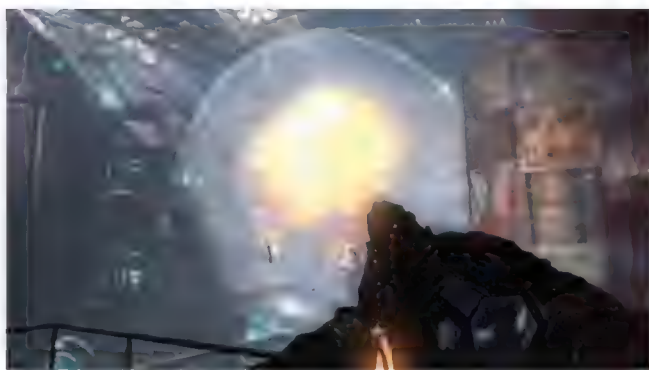




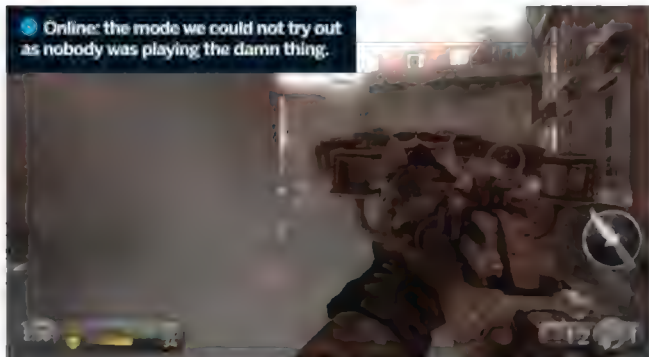
▶ Resistance: Burning Skies

• The game doesn't allow screenshots. It doesn't look quite this nice.

• Stand still, look forwards, shoot, win, repeat, die of boredom.



• Online: the mode we could not try out as nobody was playing the damn thing.



CLASSLESS CLASS

When gunfights go boring

ONE UNFORGIVABLE ELEMENT in *Resistance: Burning Skies* that we had to mention in the first review is the game's tendency to throw you into a situation where you're not supposed to shoot. It's the same old, same old. The moment it starts to rain, when you're in a very narrow corridor, it's almost impossible to avoid the enemy's line of sight. You're forced to stand still and look forward, which is exactly what the enemy wants. This is how we want to be treated. We want to be treated like a machine. We want to be treated like a machine. We want to be treated like a machine.



the very least, having an imaginative weapon set, the fact that you'll likely play the whole game using only one or two weapons is an indictment. And it sums up the experience as a whole: basic, bland, boring and the sort of game where even when you have lasers that shoot through walls and fire-spewing chainguns, you'll stick to the two basic machine guns because why bother with anything else? Hugely misjudged and a big letdown, even if it does give us hope for a bright future of Vita games that are actually worth playing.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

When you press buttons, things die, and it sometimes makes you think Vita will get some great games in future. So there's that. Otherwise, *Burning Skies* is forgettable at best and a massive step backwards for a series that recently impressed so much.

54%



REVIEW

RELEASE DATE: 25 MAY

Dirt Showdown

Dirt SMASH!



DETAILS

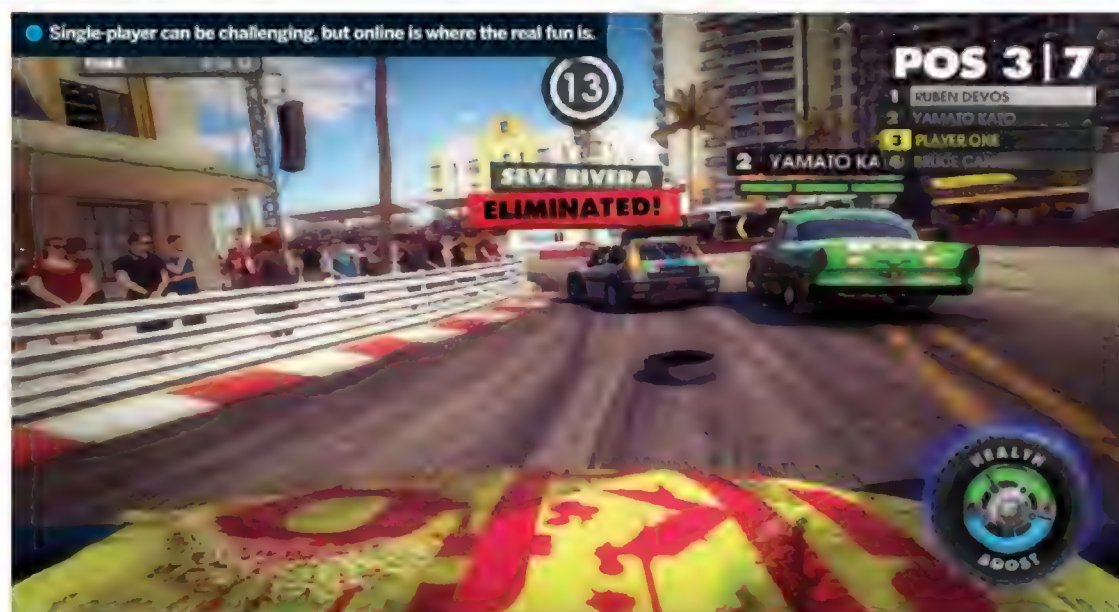
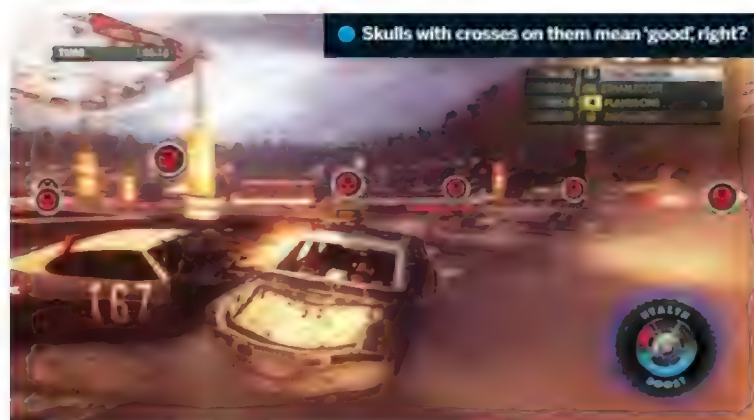
Publisher
Codemasters
Developer
Codemasters
Southam
Price
£49.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Racing
Age Rating
7+
Website
www.codemasters.com/uk/dirtshowdown/PS3/
Twitter
@dirtgame
Facebook
facebook.com/dirtgame

PS3 This series has been moving away from the pure rally focus of its Colin McRae roots, and *Dirt Showdown* is something of a culmination of those efforts. Presented as a separate entity, the game eschews straight-up rallying in favour of shorter, directly competitive events based on racing, stunts, smashing and... more smashing. And you know what? It's pretty smashing.

Showdown fills a very *Destruction Derby*-shaped hole in our hearts and does so well enough that we aren't even left lamenting the fact that Sony no longer has any intention of bringing us a new *Destruction Derby* game. Races, Domination events (be the fastest in individual sections), gymkhana, smashing things up because smashing is fun, and

"This isn't meant to be anything other than an arcade-style game"

smashing up other cars in all-out auto-brawls – again, because smashing *is fun* – make up the meat of the action, each offering something different enough to keep the action fresh and flowing over the few hours you'll likely put into it each session.



While single-player follows a career of championships, winning cash and upgrading vehicles, multiplayer adds in elements like fans, challenges for both online and offline opponents, and the ability to boost into a head-on crash with a Spanish games journalist we definitely didn't just want to boast about beating five times on the

trot. It's well done, crosses over into single-player – progress in either mode piggybacks onto the other – and, as with games like *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* and *Blur*, shows that driving games are some of the absolute best for multiplayer social interactions.

There's a loss of depth, with the game taking a resolutely more arcade approach to driving, and though you can change the controls to reflect the increased realism in the earlier

Dirt/McRae games, such accuracy does feel a bit out of place. While it's an understandable complaint, it's a bit of a futile one – this isn't meant to be anything other than an arcade-style game and, at least in what it aims for, it gets it absolutely spot-on.

Those looking for the rallying action offered in previous *Dirt/McRae* games are going to be left wanting, but then that's why this isn't a numbered entry and is presented as a distinctly separate endeavour. For cheap thrills, a single-player mode that is engaging enough to keep you dipping in and out for a long time, and a multiplayer mode that is pretty much ingrained in the entire game and its systems, it's easy to recommend *Showdown* alongside the likes of *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit*, *Blur* and *Split/Second*.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

It's big but it isn't clever – but then, who wants to be clever when you can just drive into each other at super-fast high speeds? *Dirt Showdown* successfully transplants the rally formula into an arcade mould, mainly because SMASHING STUFF IS FUN.

84%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Can you guess whether it paints soldiers in a positive light or not?



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Ubisoft Paris/
Ubisoft Red Storm/
Ubisoft Bucharest
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Third-person shooter
Age Rating
18+
Website
ghostrecon.com
Twitter
@GhostRecon
Facebook
facebook.com/
ghostrecon



Ghost Recon: Future Soldier supports the view that gaming is being dumbed down. A series that was once – while still very much a videogame – erring far more on the side of a simulation experience than an out-and-out shooter, has taken stock of what it does best, weighed up its options and then just said, 'Nah, sod it,' and abandoned most of what made it interesting in the first place in favour of making a straightforward cover shooter.

Sure, there are the co-ordinated attacks with team-mates, the spying with UAVs and the ridiculous level of weapon customisation, but it's all moot. This is run, crouch, stand behind a wall, bang bang stuff. It's handled well enough and provides a decent distraction for a brain that doesn't want to be pressured into thinking at all – and if you get off on military hardware like walking tanks, you'll be very happy indeed. But it's just so empty and soulless and, from a mechanics perspective, bland and formulaic. And we can't stop ourselves from feeling it's a shame.

Future Soldier is clearly made with multiplayer in mind, with the whole of the main campaign playable with up to three human-

controlled buddies. It plays better like this, which is a rather obvious thing to say, but it still can't drag the game out of the seemingly enforced mediocrity it's had thrust upon it. The other modes – one effectively a Horde mode and the other a more straightforward

Provides a decent distraction for a brain that doesn't want to be pressured into thinking at all

competitive option – are a bit of fun, but they simply don't bring anything beyond what's been done elsewhere, and better. And, again, it's because of that diluted complexity – rather than offering something genuinely different



in the online sphere like, say, *Rainbow Six Vegas* did – that it becomes another me-too manshooter that fades into the background.

Still, *Future Soldier* is fun at times, and it's not an abject failure. There's immense satisfaction in pulling off a synchronised takedown of four targets, and there are times when you feel you aren't being blanded to death. But those moments are all too fleeting, and soon enough you wake from the brief euphoria to realise that,

yes, you are just gunning down another 10,000 non-Americans and having it jammed down your throat that the characters doing it are 'honourable' and 'respectable'. And you sigh.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Boiling the tactical nuance of *GRW* down to much simpler elements will certainly open *Future Soldier* up to a wider audience. But it has also nullified most of what would make this a game worth bothering with. It's better online, though, naturally.

60%



RELEASE DATE: 13 JUNE

Gravity Rush

Upside down, witch you turn me, inside out and round and round



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Japan Studio
Price
£34.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure
Age Rating
12+
Website
uk.playstation.com/gravityrush/
[@PlayStation](https://twitter.com/PlayStation)
Facebook
facebook.com/GravityRushPSV



Gravity Rush is one of those games we've had on our radar for a while, but it's not a game we've been absolutely evangelical about. If you've read about it at all in preview coverage elsewhere you'll have seen plenty of gushing. But we'd played it a few times and we weren't entirely sold. It looked an interesting concept, but we just weren't feeling it.

But this is not a game to judge by its demos alone. If we were to do that we would be left cold, lonely and confused – though that's not particularly out of the ordinary, come to think of it. We would also not be sold on *Gravity Rush*.

So it's a good job the full game exists to warm us up and make us feel a bit like we're actually loved (we're not), bringing with it so much more than a limited demo could ever hope to show.

A third-person action-adventure that sees players taking control of Kat – a gravity-shifting witch-type girl who can manipulate the force that keeps us on the ground to her will. Up becomes down, left becomes down, right becomes... well, down. It's a take on manipulating the environment around you



Out of context screen GO.

that we can't recall seeing before, and it adds quite a lot to what would otherwise be a fairly basic run-around-and-hit-things game.

It's not just using your gravity manipulation – press **△** to activate, aim using the right stick or gyroscopic sensor and shoot yourself in whatever direction – as a glorified means of platforming. There's the need to race around checkpoints, timing your gravity changes to perfection to get optimum timings and find

Chase fleeing targets, leap and fall huge distances, or slide down/up/around structures – it's up to you

the best routes around the town. The game will have you chasing fleeing targets, or just balloons sometimes. There's the chance to leap and fall huge distances, necessitating pinpoint accuracy in your aiming to grab all the bonus gems and power-ups you can. Or just miss and fail – it's up to you. There's the ability to slide down/up/around structures in something that strikes us as better than this year's incarnation of *SSX* – and that comparison isn't pushing it as much as you'd think. There are, of course, many other elements, all introduced gradually as you progress and none of which feel out of place – at least relatively speaking. This is a game in which a young witch is helped by a mystic

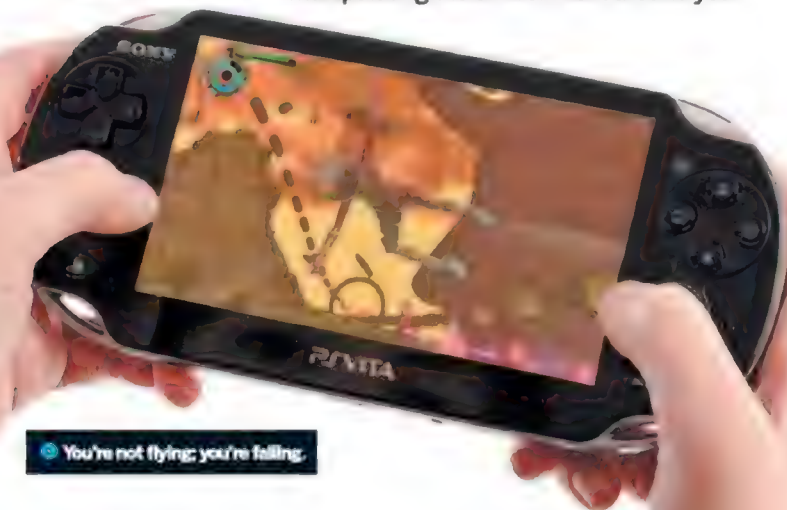
cat to manipulate the forces of gravity in order to reunite the dislodged districts of a floating town, which was made by one old man, after all, so anything goes.

Combat is a mixture, on one hand offering the more traditional action of running up and kicking blobs with customary glowing weak spots in their stupid amorphous un-faces – flowing fun, but pretty basic. But then you add in the gravity mechanics and the

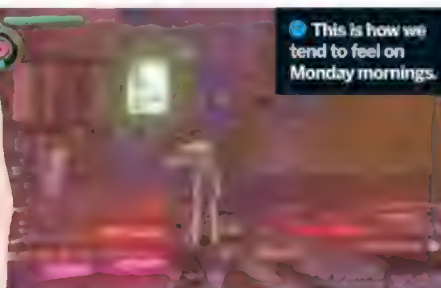
gyroscopic controls and you have that extra little bit in the combat that makes it feel different enough to be fresh. Even though

all you're doing is kicking the crap out of a selection of blobs of varying sizes and powers – from the tiny, irrelevant irritant to the massive spider-blob that *almost* makes spiders a bit less terrible – the addition of strategically positioning yourself by modifying gravity, or the ability to throw anything that isn't nailed down, or the chance to hit a few gyro-controlled super-moves all come together to provide an experience that is interesting. And that's important.

Throwing all of these mechanics into an open-world environment and letting players explore, as much as they take on the missions of lead character Kat and her amnesia-driven storyline, is a minor masterstroke. Linearity



You're not flying; you're falling.



This is how we tend to feel on Monday mornings.



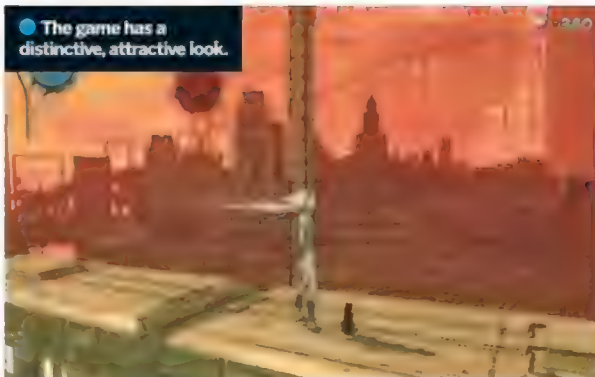
In this series



Everybody's Golf Issue 215
Because... umm... you'll probably want something else on Vita. **86%**



The game has a distinctive, attractive look.



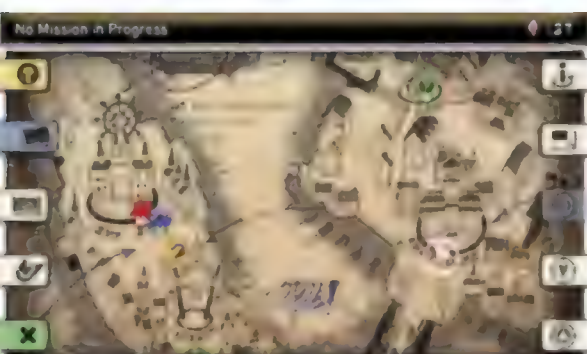
THE HORROR! THE HORROR!

It wouldn't be a Toyama production without some

THE MAIN DESIGN for *Gravity Rush* has come from one Keiichiro Toyama, whose name you may recognise if you're big on survival horror. The mind behind the original *Silent Hill* as well as the *Siren* series has now produced this rather lighthearted, bright and silly game about a clumsy witch who obsesses slightly over how she's viewed by the menfolk of the world. But worry not – or worry do, if you're a scaredy type – for there is indeed a darker side to *Gravity Rush*. It's not *Silent Hill* psychological terror, but there's enough to make you go 'eww' a couple of times. And it's a welcome touch, truth be told.



Combat can be a bit fiddly, but when it flows it's great fun.



You aren't the only one who can manipulate gravity, natch.

would have hampered the experience no end, and the feeling of liberation that comes from exploring the underside of the city while walking on the ceiling is one you won't find an equal for in any handheld games – or many home console titles, for that matter.

There's a looseness to combat that can irk at times, especially if you're using the gyroscope to aim. The hint of auto-aim does help, but it's not the most straightforward system and smacks at least a little bit of the Obligatory Vita Gimmick. Other than that, though, there's little to really complain about – the game does what it does, it does it well, and it actually goes a mite beyond what we initially expected.

But once you get past whatever that teeny tiny criticism is – mainly by training yourself

to cope with the foibles and just enjoy what's going on, because it's easy to do that – what you're left with is a beautiful, funny and, most importantly, fun game that's well worth picking up for your Vita. Though we can't help but feel that *Gravity Rush* will simply be ignored and left to die...

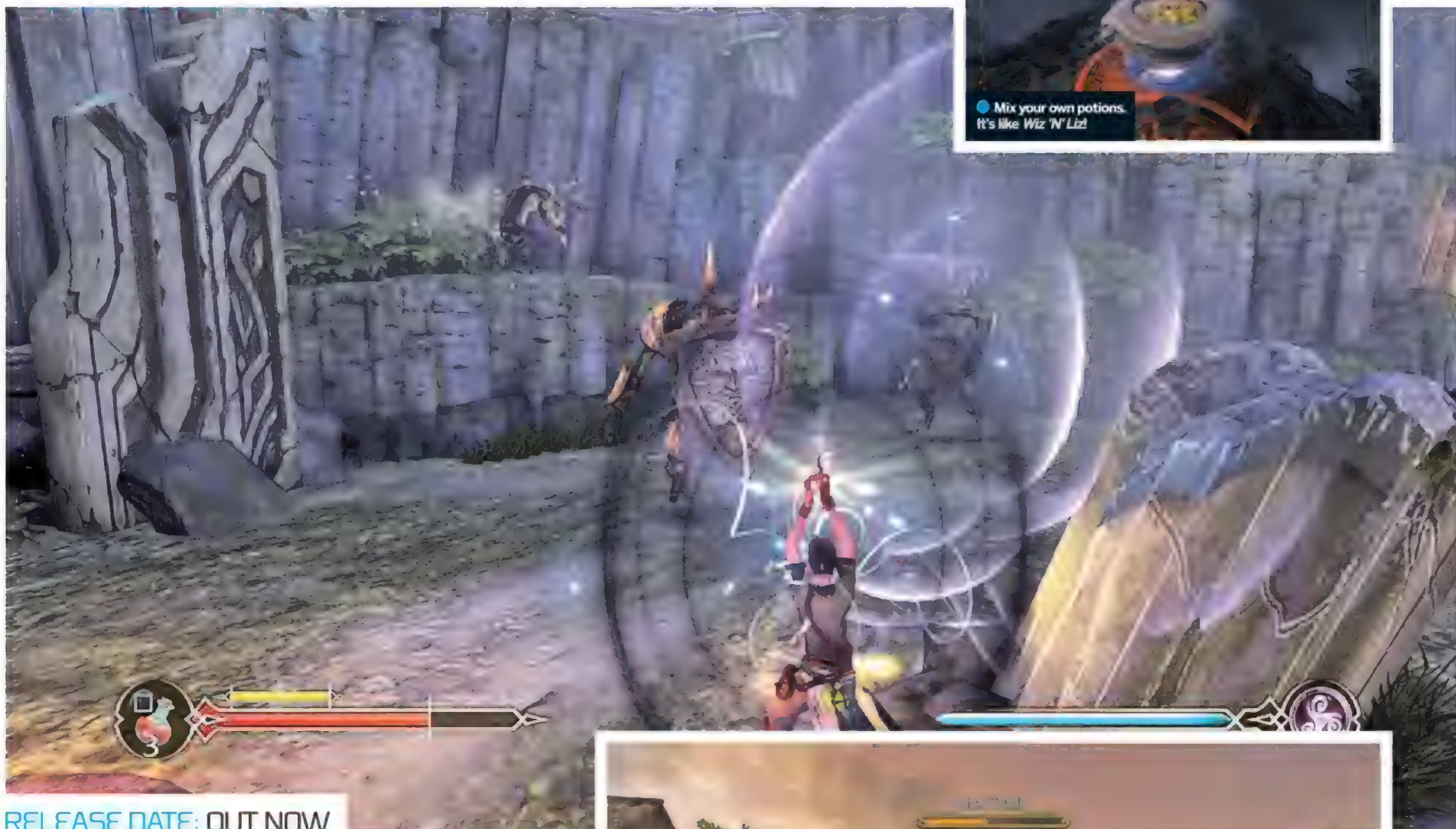
Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

If the combat was a little bit tighter this would be absolutely excellent, but as it stands *Gravity Rush* will have to settle for merely being really very good indeed and absolutely recommended for any and all Vita owners.

86%





Sorcery

Hot magical wagglegstick action



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
The Workshop/SCE
Santa Monica Studio
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
Role-playing game
Age Rating
12+
Website
us.playstation.com/games-and-media/games/sorcery-ps3.html
Twitter
@SonySantaMonica

PS3 While one of the titles used to announce PlayStation Move all those years ago, *Sorcery* has only just shown its finished face to the world as the first of the second generation of games for the motion controller. But what in the name of Thor does that mean?

Well, it means your wagglegstick-controlled action RPG displays a subtlety in its motion control that feels far less forced or clumsy than in many other Move games. Players are free to control lead character Finn on his magical adventure to blah de blah Irish folklore-inspired story of magic and faeries using the navigation controller, so no on-rails nonsense here. Move itself handles spell-casting and other such interactions, like mixing potions and repairing broken scenery. It's simple. It doesn't feel unnecessary. And, as is always mentioned in reviews of Move titles, it's accurate. So there's always that, at least.

But is *Sorcery* actually any good to play? Somewhat surprisingly, yes. Okay, so it's not the best game ever and, while there is some depth and progression in character development and potion research, it's quite a shallow experience. But these negatives can be overlooked, to some



But is *Sorcery* actually any good to play? Somewhat surprisingly, yes

extent, when you take into account the younger audience the game is aimed at. Compared to other games for those around 12 years old, it's bordering on epic – almost on a par with the *Lego* games from Traveller's Tales, in fact.

Combat is repetitive, but is mixed up every now and then with new enemies and new techniques being implemented. Puzzles are straightforward, but do at least make you think a little bit. Crafting potions, learning new spells and building up your character don't exactly offer levels of depth to the point that *Skyrim* does, but it offers enough freedom to pursue things as the player pleases that it renders the lack of depth less damaging to the experience.

As a technical showcase of how to integrate Move mechanics in an unobtrusive fashion,

Sorcery is a success. It's also nearly two years too late, to be fair, as we're at

the point where few people care about Move any more. But don't hold that against this fun little romp. It's ultimately shallow and you'll finish it in not long at all, but those wanting a *Harry Potter* game that's actually good and not *Lego* don't have many other places to turn.

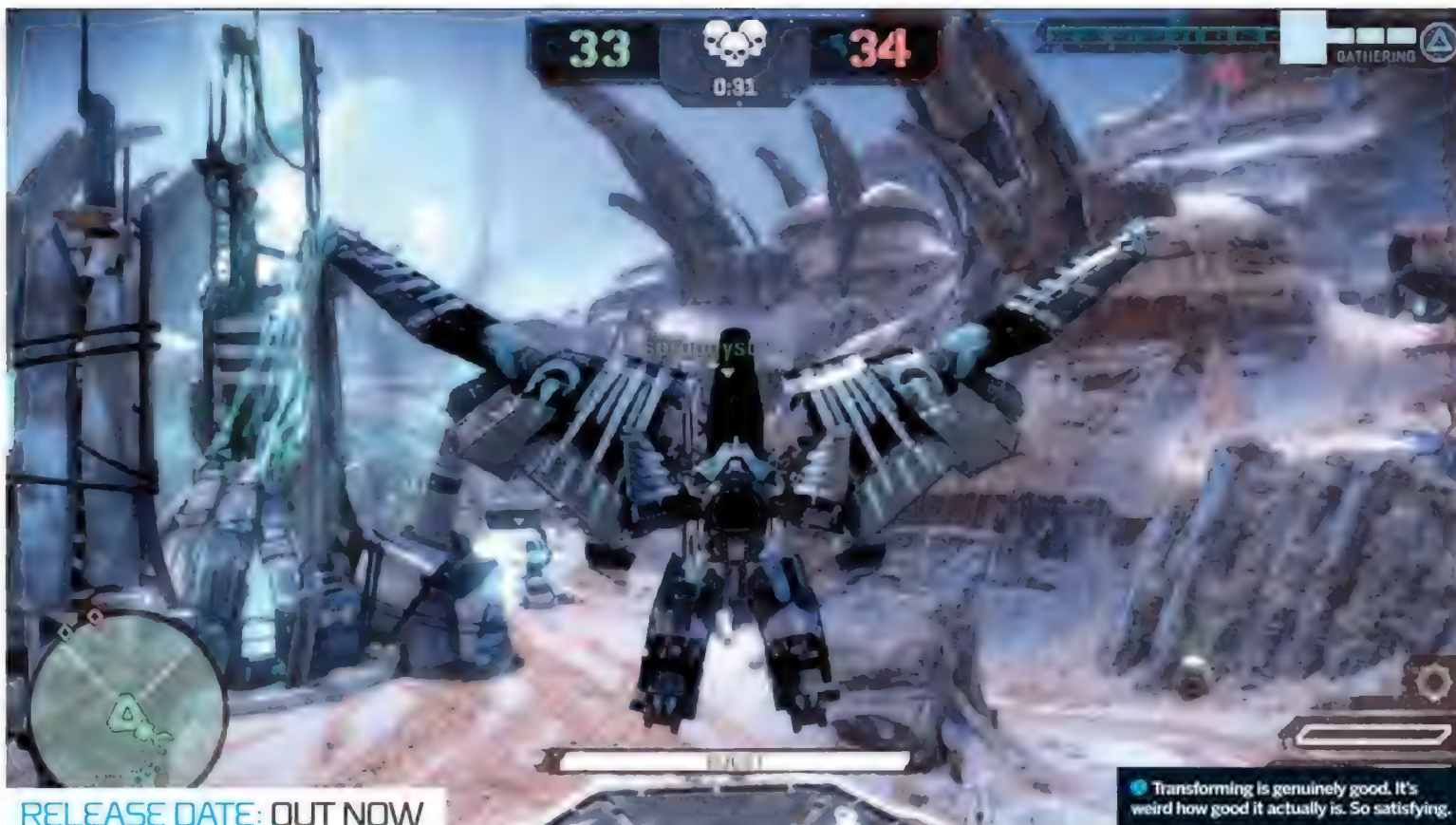
Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

A long time coming and actually worth the wait, at least in some respects, giving you an excuse to dust off your Move controller. *Sorcery* is fun and uses motion control in a way that doesn't make you want to claw your eyes out. It's shallow and short, though.

76%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Starhawk

Wiki wild wiki wild wild HAWK

PS3

Starhawk has a fully fledged single-player mode with a story, characters, objectives, cut-scenes and everything! And who are we to argue that it's effectively just a bunch of training missions to prepare you for the main draw, multiplayer, by pitting you against little more than waves of bots and teaching you the game's mechanics? **Play**, that's who. And that's what we'll say, because *that's what it is*. Don't buy *Starhawk* if you're only intending to play offline.

Online, we encounter something actually worth paying for. The basic structure is the same as the game from which *Starhawk* is born – taking the *Warhawk* template of on-foot, vehicular and air-based combat across large battlefields in a few of your usual game modes, and transposing it to the Wild West of the stars

universe that *Starhawk* takes place in. In this regard, it's very similar to what came before and will be instantly recognisable by *Warhawk* veterans. You run, you jump, you shoot, you drive, you hover a bit, you stomp-stomp-stomp, you press circle, you fly away, you feel good about life. Every. Single. Time. Seriously, this is a more satisfying transformation from mech to vehicle than anything any *Transformers* game has managed.

Anyway, there are new features thrown in that keep things fresh, mainly in the shape of the RTS-like building systems. During a match, every player is able to select a range of structures from a radial dial and place them on the battlefield, so long as they have enough rift energy. It's an interesting addition, though admittedly one sure to take some getting used to by the community – we've already seen



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
LightBox Interactive
Price
£49.99
Players
1-32
Genre
Shooter
Age Rating
16+
Website
www.starhawkthe-game.com
Twitter
@StarhawkTheGame
Facebook
facebook.com/StarhawkTheGame

players building unnecessary multiples of support structures in bases, simply because they weren't paying attention. But this will change; people will learn.

What it does mean is you can tailor a battle to your own whims, adding in a mech dispenser if you feel the need or lobbing a sniper tower into a ridiculous position just because you want to be the most in-plain-sight covert operative the world has ever seen. It opens things up and supports player freedoms, as well as improving the actual experience of playing.

Support for clans, customisation and even a co-operative Horde mode shows that *Starhawk* is only really intended to be played online, despite marketing gumph that states otherwise. Offline, it's forgettable. Online, it's great fun.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

Ignore the bluster about single-player having much about it and take into account that this is full price. What are you left with? A very good online shooter, successfully mixing in RTS elements to make for something unique in the world of PS3 multiplayer.

81%



REVIEW

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Mortal Kombat

Death in your hands



The one downside to the Vita's existence is that it has turned us all into gaming snobs. How we like to pull faces and hold our noses at the merest sight of touchscreen implementation cluttering up our purist ports. "What nonsense is this!" we cry, making wafting gestures with our hands. What drama queens we are.

This time, the theatrics are for nothing. *Mortal Kombat Vita* is packed with bizarre touchscreen and tilt oddities, such as Fatalities and various mini-games – Test Your Balance, Test Your Sight, and so on. Yet the throw-it-in-and-see-if-it-fits attitude of the original *Mortal Kombat* means these extras slide into the handheld port without any obvious friction. *Mortal Kombat* is a game that revelled in its own stupidity, so mini-games where you beat down Mileena, steal her teddy bear, and shake the fluff out of it by shaking your Vita



The Vita version looks great and is as rammed with content as its PS3 cousin.

before throwing it in the path of an oncoming train – the bear, not your Vita – make sense. Well, just about.

As for the game itself, it's fun, fresh and different. *Mortal Kombat* overcame extreme scepticism on its release to remain a fixture on the fighting game tournament circuit long enough to prove it belonged. It ditched the awkward 3D pretensions of *Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe* for plain ol' 2D gameplay, with lenient inputs and easy special moves lowering the barrier to entry as much as is arguably possible in the genre.

Combos can feel a little clumsy thanks to the stiff animations, but *Mortal Kombat* held up as well balanced and, more importantly, different. Not just because of the block button, the standard reviewer gripe since 1999, but because of the other quirks the gameplay offers. Every character has a fireball, which means everyone can compete from range, while they can all also smash out of a combo with a Breaker at the cost of two bars. It's the latter that makes meter management vital – the balance of power often lies in who has a Breaker ready to save them, and matches become tense when that safety net is spent.

Although the occasionally rough close-ups of characters suggest otherwise, *Mortal Kombat*

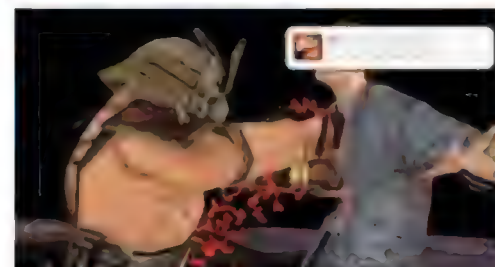


DETAILS

Publisher
Warner Bros
Developer
NetherRealm Studios
Price
£39.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Fighting
Age Rating
18+
Website
themortalkombat.com
Twitter
@MK_MortalKombat
Facebook
facebook.com/NetherRealm



Conquering all the challenges remains a formidable achievement.



is the perfect fit for the Vita. The extra Bonus Challenge Tower adds to what was already a hefty package to begin with, while the extra DLC characters such as Rain and Freddy Krueger flesh out what's there. Lots of replay value, lots to get stuck into and bloody good fun.

Ryan King

VERDICT

With a staggering amount of content packed in, *Mortal Kombat Vita* not only benefits from the balance patches from the PS3 iteration but makes for the best version when played on the go.

83%



We appreciate they may be struggling for new character ideas, but 'Zombie'?



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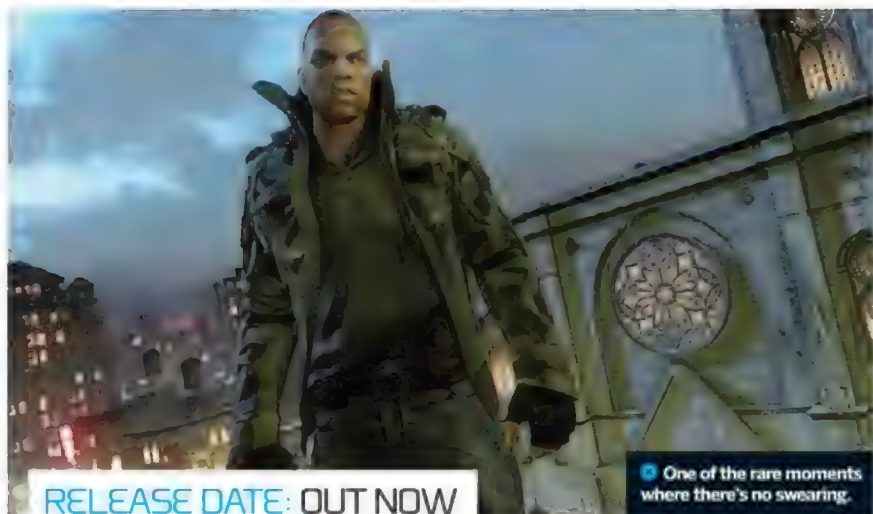
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RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Prototype 2

Get your swearbox money ready



Publisher Activision Developer Radical Entertainment
Price £49.99 Players 1 Genre Action-adventure Age Rating 18+
Website prototypegame.com Twitter @Radical_Ent Facebook facebook.com/radical.ent

Prototype 2 is a game where you run around streets

stabbing at the triangle button, stitching torn civilians into the skyline with their own stretched limbs, as dialogue like "F*** your f***ing f***hole, you f***!" competes with gunfire and explosions for volume. It's not subtle and it's not clever, but is it fun?

It is, in the short-term. *Prototype 2* has been tailored towards making combat enjoyable. It's why civilians are little more than blood bags with 'walk' and 'cower' animations; why there's so much feedback resulting from what you do, from the world crunching underfoot to panicked radio chatter; why the powers you unlock get excessively ridiculous to the point where you can't stop grinning. Combined with the silky smooth gliding around the monstrous city, *Prototype 2* is a joy to play.

However, even though *Prototype 2* manages to fight the feeling of repetition for many hours, eventually it succumbs. Missions are fun but become entirely predictable in their demands, while indoor sections suffocate the floaty, free-form gameplay with dull, clanking grey and

Dialogue like "F*** your f***ing f***hole you f***!" competes with gunfire for volume

brown corridors. Worst of all is the heavy-handed attempts at storytelling and emotion. James Heller isn't a character you care about beyond sighing at his constant swearing or sneering at his attempts to wring emotion from the player. Radical Entertainment seems to recognise the problem of warding off repetition but hasn't quite cracked how to solve it. Even so, while it lasts, this is bloody good fun. In both senses of the word.

Ryan King

VERDICT

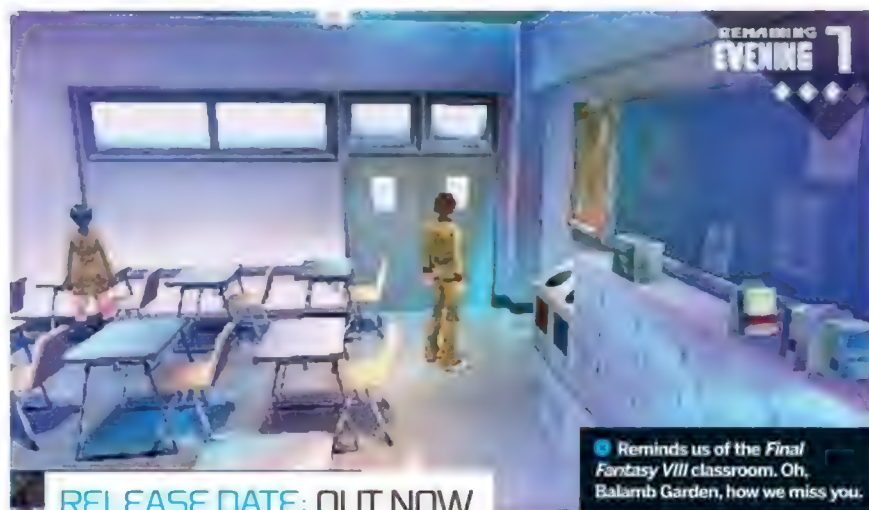
The sheer level of gory carnage sustains *Prototype 2* for a while, but when the various distractions to cover up the repetition wears off, *Prototype 2* doesn't have enough to keep you as entertained as those first magical, destructive minutes did.

75%



It looks bloody nice once it gets going, with lots of stylish touches.

SKILL 311 Damage!



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Fate/Extra

Bucking convention but oh so dull



Publisher Ghostlight Games Developer Image Epoch
Price £29.99 Players 1 Genre RPG Age Rating 12 Website fate-extra.com Twitter @ghostlightgames Facebook facebook.com/ghostlightgames

Skipping from the predictable 'Time to dust off your PSP!' intro straight to the game itself.

Fate/Extra is both good and bad. Good because it bucks the RPG convention of wet writing and annoying characters and instead has a plot that's delicately crafted and packs plenty of punch. It's the main pull of *Fate/Extra*, with the abstract aesthetics and design giving the look its own distinct personality and appeal. It's the visual result of *Shin Megami Tensei* being mashed up with *Dissidia Duodecim* while Image Epoch adds its own unique ingredients to the mix. It's an alluring game for plot and look alone.

If you haven't guessed already by its prominent absence in the review so far, the gameplay is where *Fate/Extra* wavers. The rock-paper-scissors nature of the battles makes it easy to get to grips with, but it's not nearly interesting enough to hold up through to the game's end, with the small arenas, lack of exploration and endless repetition slowly grinding down any joy from the plot. It's a real shame too, as *Fate/Extra* is a game you want to love, both due to the gorgeous look and well-crafted plot, only to find the



You can avoid battles if you wish, and after the combat grinds your patience down, you'll want to.

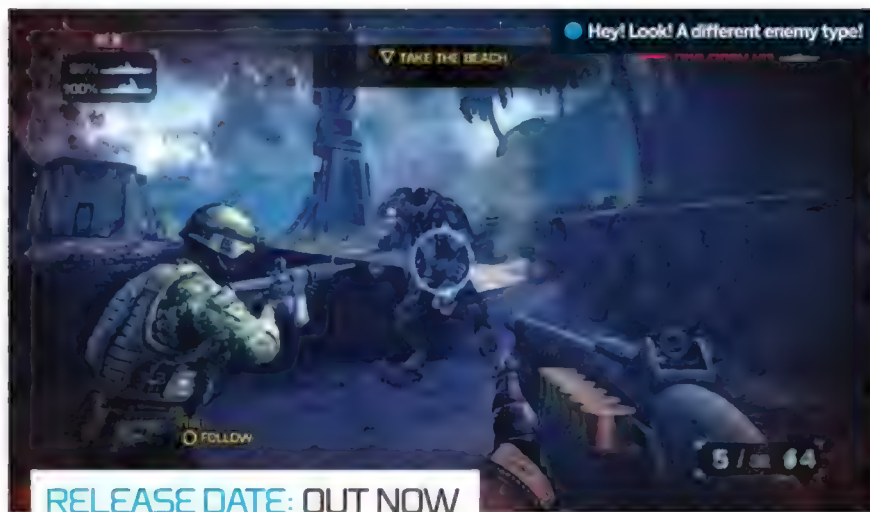
core gameplay undermines it when the novelty wears off. So, unfortunately, it's not quite time to dust off your PSP after all. Oh, wait; we didn't do that intro after all. We mean... oh, sod it. Move on to the next review! Quick!

Ryan King

VERDICT

The plot is compelling, the visual style is gorgeous, but the combat can't hold up its end of the bargain and sustain excitement. A real shame too, as visually, this is one of PSP's more interesting titles.

60%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Battleship

MORE LIKE BATTLENOTTHATGOOD
HA HA HA



Publisher Activision Developer Double Helix Games
Price £49.99 Players 1 Genre FPS Age Rating 12+
Website www.battleshipthevideogame.com Twitter @doublehelixgame Facebook on.fb.me/KhqzXz

Something something movie tie-ins are never good oh aren't we so witty and clever for pointing that out. Sigh. Look, the main thing that made us think *Battleship* would be awful was the fact that it's developed by Double Helix Games. You know what? We want to apologise to the developer for thinking that. *Battleship* isn't terrible.

But then, neither is having the flu, running out of milk or getting a paper-cut. None of these things are *truly* terrible – unless you die from the flu, of course, then you're in a whole new world of categorising how bad something is. But none of them are good things. None of them are things you would go out of your way to get involved in, in whatever way. That's where *Battleship* fits in this whole circle of (videogame) life. You wish it wasn't there, but it doesn't ruin your life that it is.

And in fact, beyond the so-basic-it-hurts first-person gunnery that's so bland it might as well be a *Battlefield 3*/*Call Of Duty* satire, there is actually an interesting mechanic at play. Namely the actual

'Battleship' part of the game. Basically, it involves some simple strategy, manoeuvring supporting ships around and sometimes taking control of them. It's easy, it's not taxing, but it's unique to the genre. So well done there.

Otherwise, *Battleship* is the running out of milk of videogames.

Ian Dransfield



VERDICT

It's not the worst game in the world – and it actually has one half-decent idea – but there really is no reason for *Battleship* to exist. If you get it for nothing, give it half an hour. If you don't, don't.

44%



PSN reviews



THE WALKING DEAD

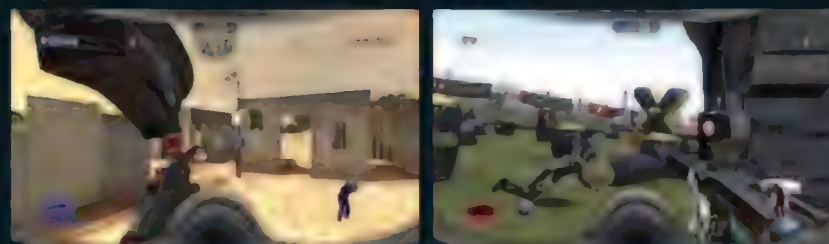
Telltale remember how to make good games again

Publisher Telltale Games Developer Telltale Games Price £3.99 Players 1 Genre Point and click



TELLTALE ONCE RULED the world of modern point-and-click games thanks to the likes of *Sam And Max* and *Back To The Future*. Then *Jurassic Park* happened. It was bad. Really bad. The good news is that *Walking Dead* proves Telltale has well and truly gotten that Jurassic-sized turd out of its system for what is its best game yet. The humour has been toned down but the engaging characters and smart structure remain, providing a gentle mix of puzzles and linear paths that remain cleverly disguised. Best of all is how much influence you have, through conversations with characters who learn to trust/hate you and key decisions on... well, you'll see. This is the first episode of five but tremendous value and well worth the cash.

89%



GREG HASTINGS PAINTBALL 2

Oh dear. Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

Publisher Majesco Games Developer Super X Studios Interactive Price £9.99 Players 1-8 Genre FPS



SO THERE WE were with our Let's-Praise-Something-New hats on, ready to have our innovation glands tickled by Greg Hastings and his paintball game... then we played it. Oh dear. You get what they are trying to do – in-depth career mode, gear with unique stats, pictures of men with mullets (wait, what?) – but the game itself is an absolute stinker. No weight to the gunplay, arenas smaller than your pub, matches over in 20 seconds, AI dumber than insects and everyone is the wrong size. How does that happen? Didn't know games could even get that wrong.

22%



DEUS EX

"What a shame"

Publisher Square-Enix Developer Ion Storm £7.99 Players 1 Genre FPS



IT'S RIGHTLY HERALDED as a classic in PC circles (the format, not those who try not to offend). In PlayStation 2 circles? It's heralded as good-but-not-as-good-as-on-PC, a catchy term but one that was deserved as PlayStation 2 didn't quite have the tech to replicate *Deus Ex*. It's also aged, all angular faces and hilarious voice-acting rather than grim atmosphere. Still, get past inclinations of snobbery and this is still an engaging, riveting adventure that shows the FPS genre is capable of so much more than linear exploding corridors. Exploring its depths is fun, tinkering with your character more fun, and challenging the design is the most fun.

83%

50 HARDEST TROPHIES

HOW HARDCORE ARE YOU?



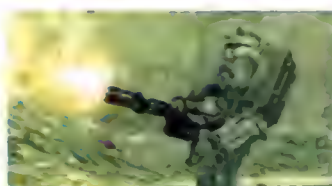
Here is a list of the absolute toughest Trophies out there. We'll help you to get those elusive bastards, but the ultimate test lies with you. Tick the Trophies you've got, add them up and find out at the end of these pages if you're the damn awesome gamer you think you are or if you're a super-uber-noober-boober-lamer gamer



50 DON'T GET COCKY, KID

Dead Space

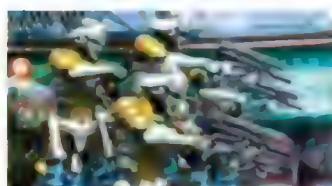
Since this Trophy is hidden, you might pass through the ADS cannon section without even realising it's there. Save just before getting into the cannon, then ensure the cannon's health stays above 50 per cent.



49 VAULT-TEC C.E.O.

Fallout 3

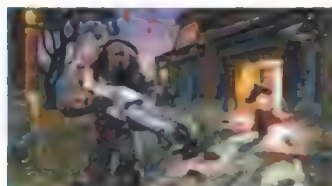
These tiny bobbleheads are easy to miss, especially since a few of them can be reached one time only at very specific parts of the game. You'll need eyes of a hawk to find all 20 or, you know, a guide.



48 TREASURE HUNTER

Final Fantasy XIII

Not only will this Trophy sap your time, but it will likely sap your will to live. Grinding your way through armies of Adamantoise to get the rare parts to upgrade your equipment is not an easy task.



47 UNTOUCHABLE

Unreal Tournament 3

Defeating any enemy on Godlike is going to be tough at the best of times, so don't be afraid to use mutators to help out. Remember, though: any effects apply to your enemy too.



46 HARD TO THE CORE

Dead Space 2

This isn't like most hardcore playthroughs: the difficulty is about the same as normal, except you're only allowed three saves max, and one of those needs to be kept until that ridiculously tough section at the end.

45 AROUND THE WORLD!

3D Dot Game Heroes

For this you need to visit every single screen, and you will undoubtedly miss one. It's not cumulative over different saves either, so search every nook and cranny and enter every cave you can across one playthrough.



44 DECORATED

Battlefield 3

Thankfully the inclusion of rented servers has made this a little easier. You need one of every ribbon, so pick one, enter a server with 500 per cent tickets, and use that hour-long match to work towards getting it.



43 MY BLASTER RUNS REALLY, REALLY HOT

Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time

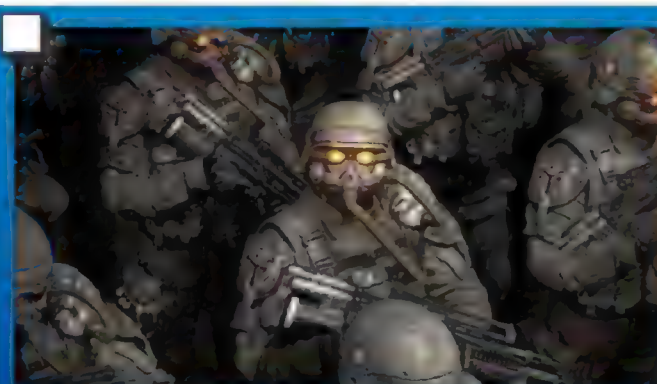
This mini-game, found at the Agorian Arena, while fun at first, will quickly begin to grate. The trick is to build up a multiplier as quickly as you can, preferably to reach 10,000 points before wave 15's boss battle.



42 FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Red Dead Redemption

Getting a pardon isn't the hard part; it's the \$5,000 bounty that is. Best spot is on top of the tavern in Blackwater, as you'll be safe and can blast away at



41 VALOR CITATION

Killzone 2

This requires you to come in the top one per cent of players on the leaderboard for that week. While you have a devoted player base to beat, it's based on score rather than skill, so just play online constantly.

Hardest Trophies

40 AMAZED

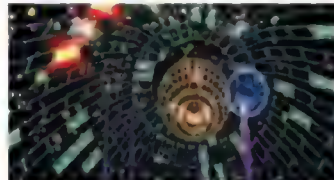
God Of War III

The labyrinth is filled with nasty beasties and a lot of spikes. If you survive the monsters, you've then got to be dextrous enough to evade the spikes too. Save beforehand, because you will die.

35 DAMN, I'M GOOD

Duke Nukem Forever

There are two reasons why this Trophy is hard. First off, playing *Duke Nukem Forever* on Insane is totally and completely unfair and will sap your patience. Secondly, you've elected to play through this awful game twice, you mentalist.



34 HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Child Of Eden

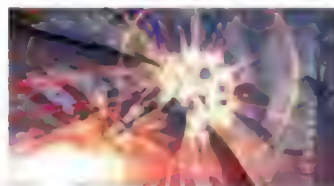
While you don't need to perfect the Hope challenges, surviving is the hardest part of the ten levels anyway. You'll only have one Euphoria to use, however, which should be saved for level 10.



33 CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY

Medal Of Honor

Tier 1 mode is unique in that it is much more than difficult, and it's also timed. There's a par time for each level, and if you don't meet it then it won't count – meaning you have to keep moving and avoid dying. Have fun.



32 ZONE ZEUS

WipEout HD

Surviving Zone mode at the higher speeds is not a forgiving task. Get the DLC if you can, since Syncopia is by far the easier track to complete this on, though even this won't help much. Just keep going.

31 AERIAL PREDATOR

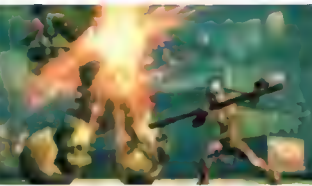
Darksiders

Save just before the on-rails shooter section where you ride the griffon. During this you'll need to kill 160 enemies. Hold down **R2** constantly until you've got a bunch of targets, and make the most of the swarms of bats.

30 GENERAL

Warhawk

Playing online with *Warhawk* will put you up against an extremely hardcore bunch. If you can stand that, then you've still got over 1,000 hours of gameplay to put in before you earn the 275,000 points to become a General. Sigh.



29 GREAT SAGE

Enslaved: Odyssey To The West

Though the majority of *Enslaved* on Hard isn't particularly challenging, there are enough difficulty spikes to cause frustration. Upgrade your skills carefully, choosing defence and shield improvements ahead of attack.

28 BETTER THAN DEVELOPERS!

Trine

Surviving the last level on very hard without dying is pretty tough, and it's really only

something practising can help solve. Patch 1.01 actually made the game tougher, though, so delete that before trying.

27 IT'S COLD OUT HERE

SSX

Both ridiculous and unfair, surviving the Cold Descent without a solar panel requires a perfect run with minimal time in the shadows. Use the wingsuit to leap over larger distances, while keeping Tricky alive to boost along the right-hand mountainside.

26 COMPLETIST

Katamari Forever

Any Trophy that is based purely on luck is not a good one, least of all in *Katamari Forever*'s case where you could be playing for hours and hours on end before your collection is completed.



25 STAR 69

Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2

You'll need a good co-op partner for this. Make sure you use everything you have at your disposal – grenades, flashbangs, whatever. Wetwork is the hardest one, but this is generally beaten through practice alone.

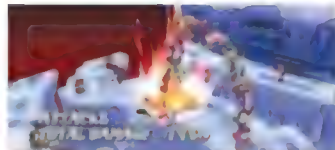
civilians and marshals down below. Just be careful getting out.



39 HUMAN STOPWATCH

Gran Turismo 5

Complete three consecutive laps within 0.2 seconds of each other. Yes, that is insane. There are tricks, such as using a go-kart, but even then it takes a lot of precision. Try to stick to a racing line for better results.



37 THE TEN BILLION DAMAGE MAN

Disgaea 3

While it's not exactly difficult to deal this many points of damage, it does require very careful cultivation of specific classes and characters. If you've managed to do this without any kind of guide, well done you.

36 MASTER AND COMMANDER

C&C: Red Alert 3

The later missions on Hard are infuriating. A human ally to help out on defence is the most important thing you can have, but if you're playing solo make sure you rush – the longer you take, the larger an enemy force

38 BEANS BULLETS BANDAGES

Battlefield: Bad Company

Surprisingly, there are still people playing this online. Killing them 10,001 times, however, might prove a little tiresome. Assault is best for getting up close, but how you score that many kills is really up to you.





24 GYM-CARNAGE

DIRT 3

Scoring 500,000 requires a lot of skill and practice. Monaco, Port Hercule is the best track since the trick locations aren't too far apart – get a 3x multiplier as quickly as you can, and smash all those foam blocks for easy points.



23 METICULOUS COLLECTOR

Ico Collection: Shadow Of The Colossus

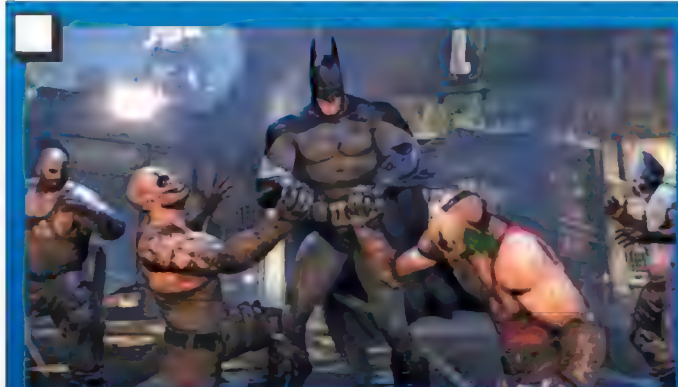
During hard Time Attack mode, you'll have the minimum stats. You must complete all 16 Time Attacks with Wander's stats at the bare minimum. You'll need to be on the top of your game to earn this.



22 TO LINK THE FIRE

Dark Souls

Dark Souls is a notoriously hard game – if you've made it past the many tough-as-nails bosses to reach this point in the game then you've worked hard.



21 PERFECT FREEFLOW 2.0

Batman: Arkham City

Now with an increased skill set, it can be tricky fitting all of Batman's abilities into a single combo. Luckily, this doesn't include gadgets now, so attempt each fight methodically until you've got a pattern.



20 50 UNIQUE PLAYERS

LittleBigPlanet 2

The hard part to this Trophy is making a level that 50 people want to play. It's not easy getting other players to notice your level, so you're going to need to get a lot of friends on board.

It takes a lot of hours too, so be prepared for a time sink.

19 KINGS OF NEVERLAND

Resonance Of Fate

Not only could you quite easily miss this optional dungeon, but even if you get there you probably wouldn't survive first, second or even the thirtieth time. As with all JRPGs, grinding is key to success here – and even then you'll be lucky.



18 DEMOLITION MAN

Battlefield: Bad Company 2

This can be tricky since you need to bring a building down on top of someone, and in

most cases they'll just leg it. Equip C4 or an RPG and go to town on any building you see in every single match.

17 FEAR THE REAPER

Unreal Tournament 3

One on one against an Insane Akasha is ridiculously tough. Consider roping in a friend to help you out, keeping an eye out for power-ups and super armour so you can grab it before Akasha does.



16 THE BLADDER OF STEEL AWARD

Rock Band 2

This Trophy is cruel. Seven hours of non-stop Rock Band with the Endless Setlist 2, but the catch being you can't pause or fail at any point. You'll need to set aside a day for this one, and practise a lot.



15 BEAT ZICO

Wipeout HD

This is one of the most notoriously difficult Trophies, but it is possible. Try to hit as many of the boost pads as you can, and keep practising your barrel rolls – they will be imperative to scoring a good lap time.



14 ANGEL SLAYER

Bayonetta

The requirements for some of these Alfheim Portals are totally obscure, and even then they can be tricky to successfully defeat. Once unlocked, you can return whenever you like, however, and can bring more powerful weapons.



13 GT-R OFFICIAL RECORD

Gran Turismo 5

It's one thing to beat a record; a whole other to do it on the Nürburgring. A seven-and-a-half-minute lap – at best – means that, if you mess up, it's a long wait until you make it around again for another attempt.

12 THE DOOD

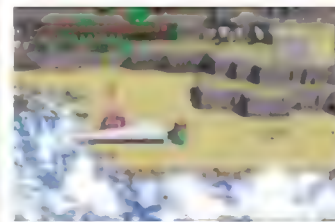
Cross Edge

Blink and you'll miss it. This Trophy requires you to unlock the true ending by viewing very specific events at very specific locations. You'll need to do a lot of exploring, and even then you might miss an event.

10 MORBID CURIOSITY

Dead Nation

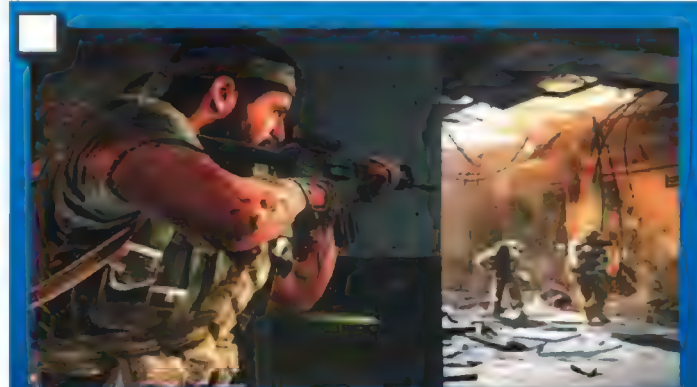
Morbid difficulty is not pleasant. You'll need to struggle through Grim difficulty, and on top of that you then need to deal with the faster and tougher zombies of Morbid mode. Make sure you have all the armour pieces you can to better survive this mode and upgrade the rifle to the max. The Launcher and the Ripper are both good weapons to upgrade too but, honestly, the rifle and its charged shot will get you out of most sticky situations.



9 SPELUNKER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

3D Dot Game Heroes

This bizarre character is unlocked either by completing the game on hard, or by entering 'Spelunker' as your character's name. True to the original Spelunker, all it takes is one hit before you're a goner – which is, unsurprisingly, frustrating later in the game. Upgrade your Gigasword as much and as quickly as you can: if you can fill the screen then that'll make clearing each room considerably easier. You'll want to make sure you collect the Hero Shield too, since it'll be important for surviving pretty much every boss fight.

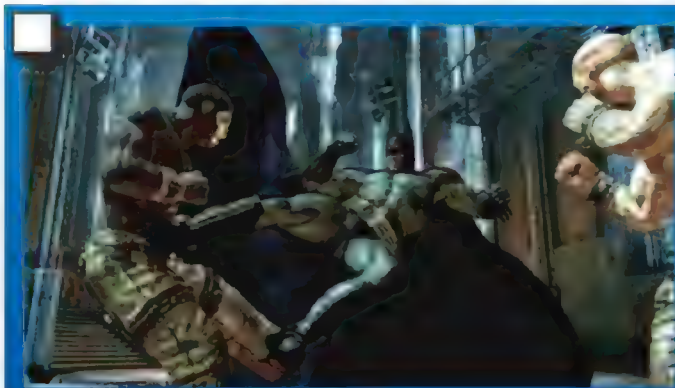


11 THE COLLECTOR

Call of Duty: Black Ops

Saving enough to buy every weapon isn't the hard part here; it's surviving until you can reach it all. Instead, buckle down in the first area and store a lot of cash before heading out and buying everything in one wave.

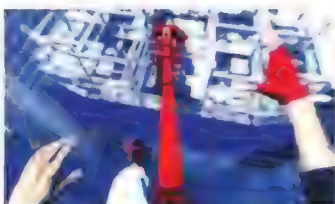
Hardest Trophies



8 FREEFLOW GOLD

Batman: Arkham Asylum

Completing the Extreme difficulties is where this Trophy really hits a wall. The trick is to complete each round with as high a combo as possible, preferably without taking any damage. If you can't do the first round or two in one long combo without being hit then you might as well give up – a high score here will make the later rounds easier. Try to get all of Batman's abilities into a single combo – don't forget ground pound – each round, since this will add an extra 5,000 to your score.



7 CHAPTER 1 SPEEDRUN

Mirror's Edge

We're using this Trophy as an example since there is another for every chapter of the game, each as difficult as the other. Time trials are tough, sure, but at least you can download ghosts to see how better players managed it. With the speedruns you have to rely a lot on your own skills and a healthy dose of YouTube videos, and even then you need to be pinpoint accurate with every jump, roll and grab. It'll put the game into a new perspective, though, and easily become your most proud Platinum Trophy.

6 SOLDIER'S TROPHY

Demon's Souls

Not only does this Trophy require multiple playthroughs and a huge grind, but it also tasks you with understanding

the game's poorly explained black and white world tendencies. It requires very specific playthroughs of the game to unlock tougher and easier modes, as certain NPCs will only show up under specific conditions. Then it requires careful use of ore to craft specific, unique weapons that you probably will never use. It's complex, it's tough and it's so satisfying to have.



5 A GOD IS BORN!

Catherine

Since Babel mode spawns entirely random blocks, it's impossible to give you a block-by-block guide. Axis Mundi is the fourth and last stage of the Babel Tower, and includes all of the techniques and block types you will have encountered throughout the game. It takes a real grasp of the different block manoeuvres before you'll

even begin to make a dent in getting gold on this stage, but remember sometimes it's better to let blocks fall than force them into a staircase.



4 DON'T LOSE FACE

Payday: The Heist

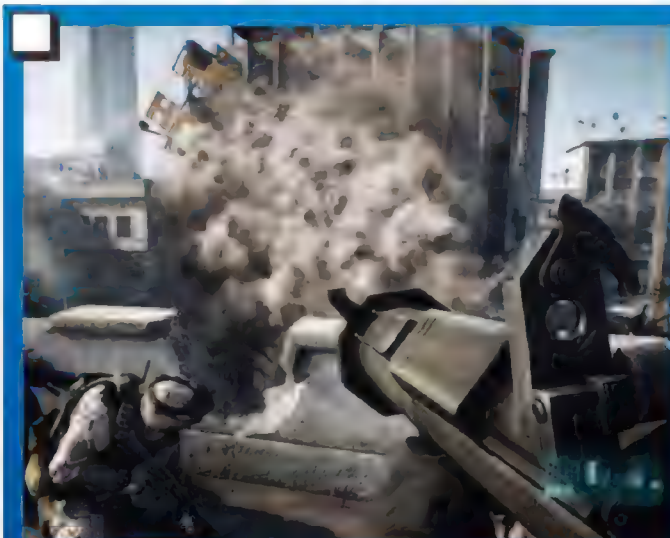
This means surviving every level on Overkill difficulty, and you have to do so without anyone going into custody. You'll need a team of four human players – preferably people you're able to co-ordinate with – and at the very least level 90, though more would be better. Use ammo and medkits conservatively and ensure you make it your priority to revive any team-mate who is downed. Watch for assault waves too, and don't try to rush them.



3 VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty HD

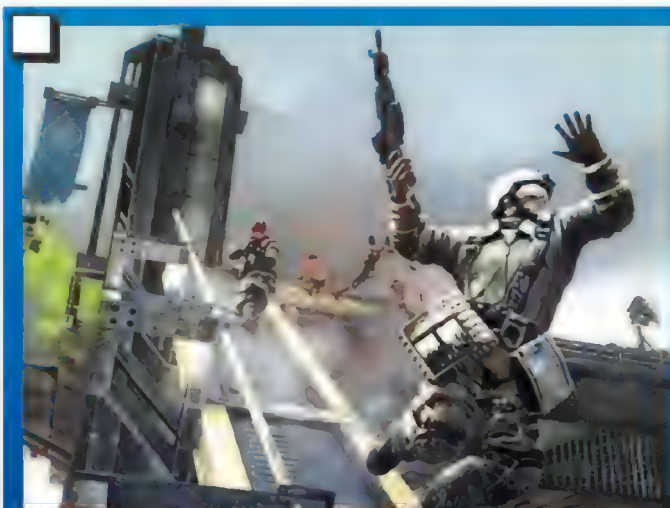
To start, make sure that you save regularly – there is no auto-save function after completing VR missions, so avoid losing important data by saving after every difficult mission is completed. There are a lot of VR missions to get through, some more difficult than others. MGS1 Snake's missions are some of the hardest, and will take a lot of practice before you succeed. Remember to keep an eye out for faster, more aware guards – and avoid getting detected at all costs.



2 BULLSEYE

Battlefield 3

First, you'll need a friend and a headset. You can't signal your position at all, which means timing your shots simultaneously. Most of the enemies appear in pairs, until a group of three appear along the riverside – here someone needs to be on lower ground to snipe two together. The next batch is the toughest, with three groups appearing in the courtyard. You and your team-mate will have to be quick, and take out the left-hand group, then the right, and then the one in the middle. Good luck.



1 HEROIC SURVIVOR

Killzone 2

It's hard enough surviving the main campaign on Elite difficulty with Killzone 2, but the hardest part of this Trophy is the last battle with Radek. The fight plays out in stages, at first on the ground, then on the balcony above. Don't bother damaging Radek when he's at the back of the room; instead clear out the various Helghast soldiers. Once clear, Radek will stealth behind you – switch to shotgun and be ready for him, as if he gets too close you'll meet the pointy end of his knife.

HOW MANY DID YOU GET?

GAMING NOOB – MUST TRY HARDER

0-10 You know how to pick up the pad and press the buttons in a vaguely correct order but cry when sterner challenges arise.

WORK IN PROGRESS – YOU'RE ON THE WAY

11-30 You've faced the toughest challenges on the PS3 but backed down as soon as blood was involved. Keep training and get back out there, soldier.

ALMOST THERE – DAMN, YOU'RE GOOD

31-44 You have lightning reactions, mad skills and a small scar above your eye that you got when you were a child, but we're blaming games.

OH DEAR GOD WE'RE TERRIFIED OF YOU

45-50 What... what are you? Statues have been built of you, using your fallen enemies as material and held together with fear.



GAME



CLIFF DIVING

A simple reaction-based game that involves turning wherever you're playing into cliff-diving locations. It's actually fun, though – somewhat ironically – rather shallow, and it is compulsive enough to keep you playing for at least a little bit.

GAME



FIREWORKS

It's not quite *Fantavision* like we hoped, but *Fireworks* is a fun little distraction, though it really doesn't do much with the AR cards. Tap a firework at the top of its flight to make it explode and score points. That's it. And it's fun.

GAME



PAINT PARK

Heard of *Draw Something*? This is sort of like that. Paint using your touchscreen, realise you have no artistic talent, feel a bit ashamed. That's our Kratos on the left; **Play** reader @tashamp3 drew the Kratos on the right. Talented people, eh? Grrrr.

GAME



TABLE FOOTBALL

You have to cut these things some slack, because they are free and all, but still – *Table Football* is a bit pap. It's *Subbuteo*, basically, flicking players around the table. But it's inaccurate and thoroughly boring. Like *Subbuteo*, really.

THE 12 FREE

Paying for things is overrated – so get these 12 apps



GAME



TREASURES OF MONTEZUMA BLITZ

Freemium should be great, but here it isn't. A straightforward match-three gem puzzler means it's pretty standard, but the addition of a pay-for-lives system is just nonsense. They can refill for nothing, but that takes time. It's grating, really.

GAME



FROBISHER SAYS!

'Vita's own *WarioWare*', we could lazily say – so we will – *Frobisher* is a collection of genuinely strange mini-games. It's a lot of fun while it lasts and actually managed to make our steely exteriors crack to raise a few chuckles. Well worth £0.

FREEBIES OF VITA

and games on Vita for a princely sum of zero monies



APP

SKYPE

Skype is genuinely one of the best, most useful things invented in the last decade – maybe more. Free phone calls through your Vita, and you can use it while playing games? Yeah, that just got a whole lot better. Recommended. Nay – essential.

APP

FACEBOOK

You know it, and you either hate it for perceived crimes against privacy or love it for letting you see unflattering photos of your normally beautiful friends. On Vita, Facebook works perfectly well, and it's a nice complement to the system's other social features.

APP

LIVETWEET

Publishing your inane and often insane thoughts in 140 characters or under is part and parcel of this connected world we live in, so it's handy to have a free Twitter application. Oh, look! It's a free Twitter application! Does what you'd want it to.

APP

MUSIC UNLIMITED

The subscription-based music service is the closest you'll get to Spotify on the Vita – seeing as it's pretty much the same thing, that's a good thing. There's no truly free service, though, but you can get a free trial if you're a new user.

APP

FOURSQUARE

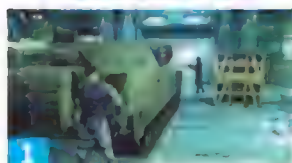
If you 'get' Foursquare then you're probably already using it, so why not get it on your Vita too? It needs a 3G model to get the most out of it, though it does work on Wi-Fi, allowing you to check in to coffee shops the world over. Also: other places.

APP

FLICKR

Flickr is something you either ignore or use religiously, but either way there's no denying it's a useful and robust collection of photos and search algorithms. Now you can browse shots of pretty much anything, wherever you are in the world – bonus!

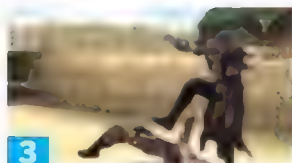
TOP TEN PSN RETRO



1 Metal Gear Solid



2 Resident Evil 2



3 God Hand



4 Final Fantasy IX



5 Streets Of Rage 2



6 The Secret Of Monkey Island



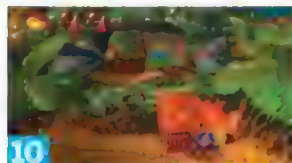
7 Driver



8 Final Fight: Double Impact

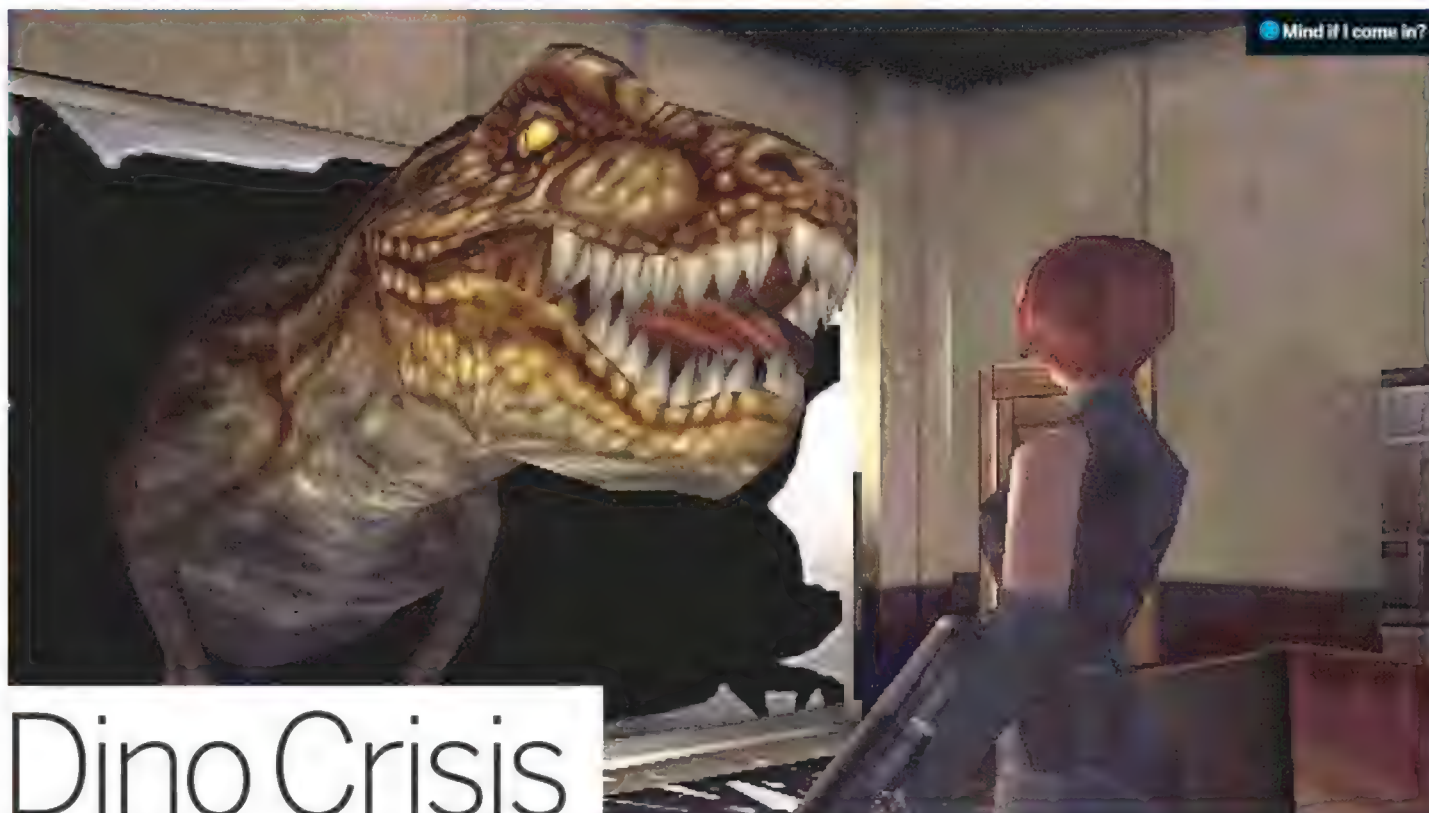


9 Sonic The Hedgehog 2



10 Crash Bandicoot

RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?



Dino Crisis

• Release date October 1999 • Publisher Virgin • Developer Capcom
• Games it influenced *Resident Evil* series



THE PLANNING

MEETING for *Dino Crisis* must have been the easiest in history. Legend has it that Steven Spielberg likes pitches that are under 25 words long, and, if true, he'd have loved the pitch for *Dino Crisis*: 'It's *Resident Evil* with dinosaurs.' Perfect.

After all, how could it go wrong? Capcom was essentially taking its highly acclaimed survival horror franchise, and putting mo'fo dinosaurs in it. It barely needed coding: just a box with a picture of a T-rex and Capcom's name on it would have sold more copies than the last and next 16 *COD* games combined.

Surprisingly, given that Capcom is known as a champion laurel-rester, the company

actually did more than that, iterating on the technology front to incorporate a 3D camera – which, after the static ones of *Resi*, was a nice move forward – along with movement while your gun is drawn, the ability for dino to knock your weapon out of your hand, and danger events, which saw you mashing a button to escape harm.

It was quite a technical leap forward at the time, and it suited *Dino Crisis*'s setting and scenario. Which is to say that it nicely complemented and made enjoyable a game that was, is and always will be *Resident Evil With Mo'Fo Dinosaurs*.

The plot, for those of you who care about these things, sees four special forces soldiers dropped into an island-based science lab that's gone silent. As anyone with a brain or

a DVD collection knows, this is never a good idea, and sure enough one member is eaten by a T-rex seconds after arriving. Lad.

The three remaining members – Albert Wesker, Jill and Token Comic Relief Man – then explore the facility while looking for Dr Kirk, a scientist working on the powerful, time-rendering, dinosaur-bringing 'Third Energy Theory' for a foreign government.

As well as your standard enemies – velociraptors, annoying little turkey-sized things that make you want to put your foot through the TV – Capcom introduced a persistent enemy in the form of the massive T-rex. The company would follow this up a year later with the Nemesis stalking you throughout *Resident Evil 3*, and both these enemies performed similar roles: getting in players' faces at the most inopportune times possible, cranking the tension with their omnipresent threat.

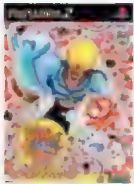
This new danger, combined with the previously mentioned improvements and futuristic sci-fi overtones, made for an enjoyable game. It wasn't as good as *Resident Evil*; the atmosphere wasn't the same and combat became dull and predictable. It was, however, a good survival horror title, and, more importantly, the game that would eventually give us the more action-packed *Dino Crisis 2*. Or, as it's known around the office, The Greatest Sequel Ever. Get both of these on the US PSN Store and you'll know what we mean.



WHAT WE SAID: Issue 52 • 94%
"Every ounce the monster it promised to be"

NEVER COMING TO PSN #6

Bobobo-bo Bo-bobo: Hajike Matsuri



- Release date 2003
- Developer Hudson

SOOOOOO... WELL, there's no easy way to describe this game. Being the professionals that we are, however, we'll do it. Ahem. You walk into the camera, attacking your enemies with what appears to be nose hair, while the name of the game – yes, we haven't gone mental – is sung on a loop as the game progresses.

Apparently it's based on an anime of the same name, which focuses on the battle between the titular main character, whose attack is actually called Fist of the Nose Hair, and Emperor Bald IV, who goes around subjugating villagers and stealing their hair. Yes.



Unfortunately, the game seems utter pump, but there's no denying that this is one of the craziest games we've seen, and we've seen a lot in our time. We'd recommend that you buy it, if we didn't suspect that all known copies have been rounded up and disposed of for being far, far too incredi-mental, even for Japan.

WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT

Adidas Power Soccer



WHENEVER YOU TALK about retro games with a large enough group, someone always pops up with the tired

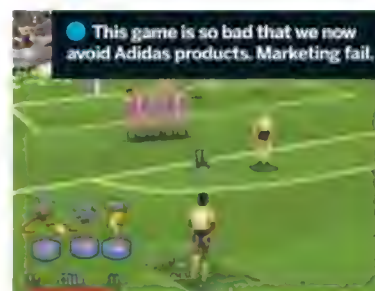
'old games were rubbish' line. They're wrong, of course, unless they're talking about old football games, which by and large were absolute turd.

There are exceptions to the rule – ISS/PES, Sensi, etc – but for every one of those there were a thousand Adidas Power Soccers doing the rounds. Essentially one long advert for the sportswear firm with some rubbish gameplay tacked on the

end, Power Soccer's one defining feature was its... uh... power.

Instead of just playing a straight game of football, here you could score from the halfway line with a header. Shots screaming in from 50 yards were par for the course, which was handy as the concept of dribbling or passing with these ball physics was completely unrealistic. This is a game where you could launch the ball 60 yards and watch it stop dead two bounces after landing.

Oh, and it also had an extraordinarily sexist 'women's commentary' option. Yes. And you thought FIFA 12's Tactical Defending was bad.



PS2 CLASSICS REVIEW - FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR



The Ghost of Recon Past

PANDEMIC STUDIOS HAD a bit of a reputation for creating knock-around, childish games like *Mercenaries: Playground Of Destruction* and *The Saboteur* before it was taken out back and shot, so some of you may be surprised to find out that it was also responsible for this super tactical ooh-rah-'em-up.

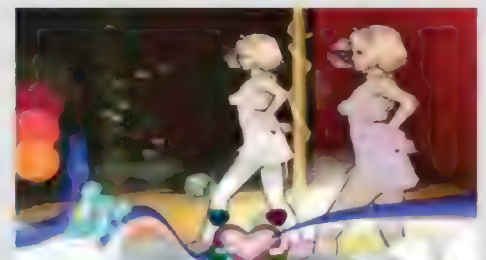
A training tool for the US Army turned game, you couldn't directly fire your weapon; instead you manoeuvred your squad into place and gave them orders from there. One team would handle the suppressing fire; the other would then take up a more advantageous position and lay down the gunishment. This basic gameplay informed most of the experience, but FSW was surprisingly gripping for something with such dry source material. It was so successful that it even warranted a sequel, which was subtitled *Ten Hammers*. So maybe Pandemic wasn't crazy all the time. Just most of it. If you're a military nut, you might get a kick out of it, but if you look hard enough a version that's free to play can be found online.

RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Transformers: Beast Wars

ONE OF PLAY'S lowest ever scorers, this notched an impressive 10% way back in issue 67. Naturally, this made us want to play it, but, well, that's just a waste of precious time and oxygen.



Dog Of Bay

DON'T PRETEND YOU'VE heard of this utterly bizarre rhythm-action game. We haven't heard of it, and we reviewed the thing. And gave it 90%. Yes. We suggest you go to bit.ly/IURkmt immediately and check out what all the fuss was about.



Dead Or Alive 2

THIS GOT MAMMOTH scores at the time, which we'd love to tell you was down to the fact that it was brilliant – it wasn't; it was just good – but it was more down to the fact that the boobs bounced more the higher age you said you were.



Silent Scope

IN THE ARCADES this came with a ruddy great sniper rifle to play it with. At home you played it with a pad, which we've got to say ruined the atmosphere somewhat. There are still some good moments here, and you can now buy a sniper rifle peripheral for it, but nah.

PLAYLIST

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS TOP FIVE GAMES OF 2012 SO FAR



top five RYAN KING

- 1 Devil May Cry HD Collection
- 2 Mass Effect 3
- 3 The Walking Dead
- 4 Binary Domain
- 5 Touch My Katamari



top five IAN DRANSFIELD

- 1 Everybody's Golf (Vita)
- 2 Journey
- 3 Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning
- 4 Mass Effect 3
- 5 The Darkness II



top five STEVE BURNS

- 1 Silent Hill: Downpour
- 2 UFC Undisputed 3
- 3 The Darkness II
- 4 Metal Gear Solid HD Collection
- 5 Crash Time 4: The Syndicate



top five ANDY SALTER

- 1 My second Skyrim playthrough
- 2 Skyrim DLC (when released)
- 3 Fallout: NV Ultimate Edition
- 4 My third Skyrim playthrough
- 5 Skyrim 1.5 patch

PS3 LISTING

game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	58%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%

game	issue	score
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	219	37%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Dogma	219	48%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%

game	issue	score
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	51%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
God Of War III	190	88%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Max Payne 3 PS3	77%	Fate/Extra PSP	60%
Resistance: Burning Skies PSV	54%	Battleship PS3	44%
Dirt: Showdown PS3	84%	The Walking Dead PSN	89%
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier P83	60%	Greg Hastings Paintball 2 PSN	22%
Gravity Rush PSV	86%	Deus Ex PSN	83%
Sorcery PS3	76%		
Starhawk P83	81%		
Mortal Kombat PSV	83%		
Prototype 2 PS3	75%		

game	issue	score
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	206	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Letsure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%

game	issue	score
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
nail'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm Generations	217	53%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%

game	issue	score
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	156	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%

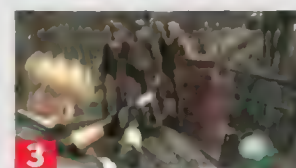
TOP TEN TERRIFYING GAMES



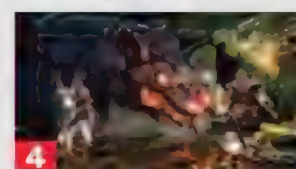
1 Silent Hill HD Collection



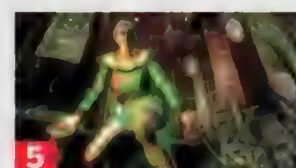
2 Dead Space 2



3 Resident Evil 4



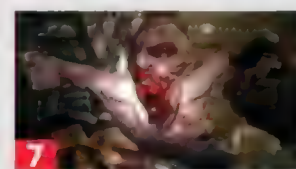
4 Dark Souls



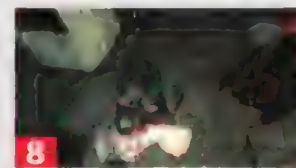
5 BioShock



6 Silent Hill: Downpour



7 F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin



8 Condemned 2



9 Fallout 3



10 Michael Jackson: The Experience

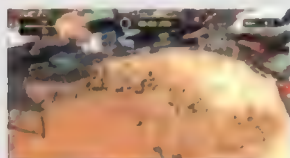
*denotes import review

PS3 TOP FIVES



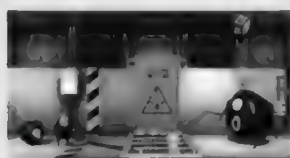
FPS

- 1 Battlefield 3
- 1 Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3
- 3 Deus Ex: Human Revolution
- 4 Resistance 3
- 5 Portal 2



RACING

- 1 WipEout 2048
- 2 Gran Turismo 5
- 3 Motorstorm RC
- 4 Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit
- 5 Dirt 3



PS VITA

- 1 WipEout 2048
- 2 FIFA Football
- 3 Everybody's Golf
- 4 Uncharted: Golden Abyss
- 5 Escape Plan



ADVENTURE

- 1 Mass Effect 3
- 2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 3 Saints Row: The Third
- 4 Dark Souls
- 5 Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning



FIGHTING

- 1 Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike
- 2 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend
- 3 Street Fighter X Tekken
- 4 SoulCalibur V
- 5 Tekken 6

game issue score

SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%



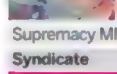
Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless you're a fan of the Sega Rally series, you'll want to go for the other two. But if you're a fan, this is the one to get.

Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper Elite V2	219	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
SoulCalibur IV	185	84%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	182	90%



Split/Second: Velocity is a racing game that's as fast as a cheetah. It's a great game for anyone who loves racing.

Sports Champions	196	83%
SSX	216	45%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%



The fact that Super Street Fighter IV is a fighting game is a bit of a surprise. It's a great game for anyone who loves fighting.

Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	90%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%



WARNING: The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is a game that's as big as a giant. It's a great game for anyone who loves role-playing.

The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%

game issue score

The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%

The Orange Box	161	93%
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	219	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%



UFC Undisputed 2009 is a fighting game that's as fast as a cheetah. It's a great game for anyone who loves fighting.

UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%



Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception is a game that's as big as a giant. It's a great game for anyone who loves action.

Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%



Vancouver 2010 is a game that's as big as a giant. It's a great game for anyone who loves sports.

Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wii Fit	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%

game issue score

WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%

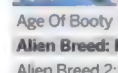
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%

After Burner Climax	193	91%
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Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.

Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Army	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blotus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Brail	188	93%



We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for Brail. Simply brilliant.


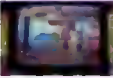



Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%







Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
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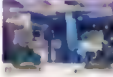



It doesn't have MW2's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.

Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%

game	issue	score
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
 This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubix HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
Detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Dropitz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explosion	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
 This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list		
Final Fantasy VII	181	90%
 Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997		
Final Fantasy VIII	191	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fOw	151	90%
 Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fOw is an innovative title available on the Network		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gating Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
The House Of The Dead 4	219	82%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperbolloid HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Infamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	91%
 Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%

game	issue	score
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	196	90%
 Lara is back to her best in The Guardian Of Light. Tomb Raider fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Lumines	209	90%
 We had to wait a while, but just like with Brad it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that – a quality experience		
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines: Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
 While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
 Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library		
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Pengo	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
 If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well		
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
 One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag		
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%

game	issue	score
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
 This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue		
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skullgirls	219	88%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldier-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
 The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Baconing	210	72%
The Last Guy	171	91%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	193	92%
 LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN		
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotal: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Turnle	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
Wipeout	01	89%
Wipeout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	57%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

PS3'S BEST GAMES BORDERLANDS 80%, PLAY 185



Don't let a flat 80% discourage you. Aside from the fact that it's an excellent score in its own right, it can safely be quadrupled when three other friends are thrown into *Borderlands*. Yes, it's our first 320%-rated game.



All right, that's a bit far, but *Borderlands* fits nicely in the realm of games that offer a bit of challenge – but not too much – and are great to relax with alongside friends. We've been reminded of this now the sequel is close to release.



Aimlessly wandering, obsessively plundering loot and shooting 'midget psychos' is fun in single-player, sure. But it's in groups that the Gearbox game transcends its rather basic beginnings and becomes one of the best things available on the PS3.



It's one of those games where, when laid out in simple terms, it doesn't seem to add up. It brings nothing to the genre not seen elsewhere. Why would people care about playing it, then? But they did – they *do*. And with good reason.

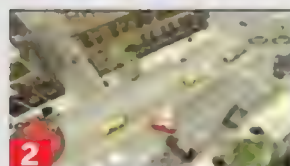


There's every chance we're overstating the importance of *Borderlands* because of the irritatingly addictive effect it has on our brains. This may lead to clouded judgement and uncritical thinking relating to the game. Then again, it might just be that *Borderlands* is ace.

TOP TEN PSP GAMES (IT'S NOT DEAD YET)



1 MGS: Peace Walker



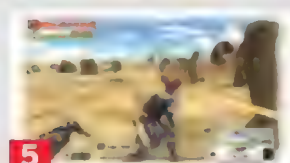
2 GTA: Chinatown Wars



3 LittleBigPlanet



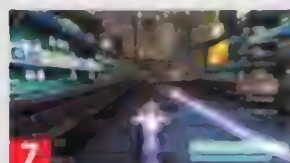
4 Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness



5 Valkyria Chronicles 2



6 SoulCalibur: Broken Destiny



7 WipEout Pulse



8 Ridge Racer 2



9 OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast



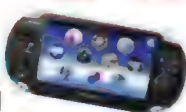
10 Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

game

issue

score

PS VITA LISTING



A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Escape Plan	215	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Hustle Kings	215	81%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Ridge Racer	215	48%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Kataman	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

PSP LISTING



300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	54%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core - Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%

*denotes import review

game

issue

score

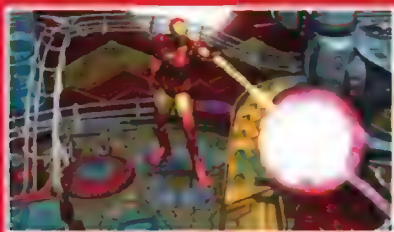
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FiatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	184	88%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ - Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%

game

issue

score

Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	60%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%



WHAT (have they been playing?)

MARVEL PINBALL

WHO (who are they?)

Ian Dransfield

WHY (was it chosen?)

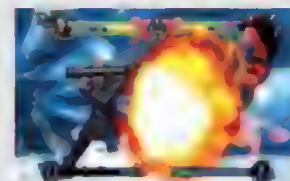
Who doesn't want to shoot their balls at Wolverine's face?

PS PLUS HAS got a lot better over the last year or so, but it didn't really hit its stride for me until one point: when it gave away *Marvel Pinball*. I had heard some vague mumbling about it being a solid re-creation of the game I so loved in the pubs of my youth – I'm northern, so of course I went to pubs in my youth – but nothing I was told had yet convinced me to part with cash for it. It popped up as free for subscribers, so I grabbed it and gave it a quick play. A quick play that lasted hours. And I keep going back to it every single day.

Why? Surely it's just pinball? But that's exactly it – it's the most faithful virtual version of pinball I've seen outside of that broken *Star Trek: The Next Generation* table in the arcade in Tenerife where the man refused to give me my money back even though the ball was stuck and I was on a good run during one of the Q-based bonus games on it. Wait, what?

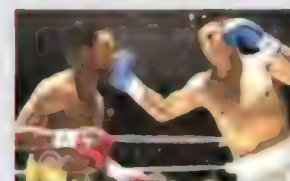
It's an exceptional re-creation of a brilliant game, well worth any initial outlay. Yes, I mean more than free.

PS3'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Doing massive combos easily
PLAY: ULTIMATE MARVEL VS CAPCOM 3 (VITA)

There's a mode where you tap the screen and it does full combos for you, making it the easiest game ever made. It's known round here as 'Bandah Mode' after Sam Bandah on sister mag *games™* and his (complete lack of) mad skills.



Sporting narrative

PLAY: FIGHT NIGHT CHAMPION

Why no other sports games do this we do not know – attach a story, some motivation, a whiff of the underdog to the single-player. It almost forces you to want to play it. It's brilliant. More, please, sports games.



Games so bad they're... bad

PLAY: GENJI

No giant enemy crab or massive damage jokes can prepare you for how bad *Genji* is. Seriously, it's not even funny-bad. It's absolutely without merit. To think this came out with the PS3 itself...



Not having to buy DLC to get a lot of stuff for your money

PLAY: THE ORANGE BOX

An EA release with five games in it and no DLC. That's *The Orange Box*. That's Valve. It wasn't the best port, but it takes us back to when not everything was 'monetised'.



Destroying nostalgia

PLAY: THE SIMPSONS

When you were wee, this was great. When you played it for ten minutes, 20p a go, it was ace. Then you play it again as an adult and realise that it's... well, it's not very good, is it? Nostalgia: destroyed.

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

What has the Play team been indulging in this month?

WHAT (have they been playing?)

UNCHARTED 3

WHO (who are they?)

Ryan King

WHY (was it chosen?)

Going for Platinum

I WASN'T A fan of *Uncharted 3* first time round. I loved the characters, dialogue and setting, but the shooting? Eugh. It was all over the place. I've been to a shooting range in Las Vegas and hit the target more often than Drake, and that was with the loud noise scaring me, a Sambuca hangover and the odd hot 9mm casing landing in my trainer.

Naughty Dog heard the complaints and patched the aiming. Shooting became fun again. Beating *Uncharted 3* on Crushing with the new alternate aiming setting was easier than beating it on Hard with the old aiming.

Except for one big long bit (that's what she said): the cruise ship. The armoured guy with the LMG who can't feasibly be taken down without a grenade launcher – why? You have to wait for the guy with the grenade launcher to turn up, kill him, leave cover to grab the big weapon, and use it, all while avoiding the LMG shredding you to bits. Pad-bitingly hard.

There's also the stealth bit in the ballroom that's impossible to stealth. Why is this even in? Why would Naughty Dog even pretend you can stealth it? They made it. They should know. I don't tell you that by strapping Play to your back you can fly and if it doesn't work it's not my fault that you didn't believe hard enough.

Get those bits down and it's plain sailing until the end. Is it worth it? Only you can decide. It's better than a Sambuca hangover, though.





KINGDOMS OF AMALUR: RECKONING



WHAT WE SAID

PLAY 215
"Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning is not perfect – in fact, in many places it's damn low rent – yet somehow it manages to be just as satisfying to play as Dragon Age II. It's compulsive – as all good action RPGs need to be – but lacks the quality to make it a game for all tastes."

70%
81
 out of 100
 metacritic

WHAT OTHERS SAID

DID YOU PARTAKE IN THE CHARMS OF KINGDOMS OF AMALUR? IF SO, WAS IT A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SKYRIM? IF NO, WHAT PUT YOU OFF?



STUART NEWTON: Delved into it in between other gaming jaunts. Dare I say it, I even favour it a tad more than *Skyrim*. More colourful and fun, more my kind of experience.

RICHARD GYDE: Played the demo and enjoyed it; reminds me what *Dungeon Siege* and *Dragon Age* should have been. Might make it my next purchase.

DANIEL 'DRAKE' GOUGH: I'm a big RPG fan and it looks as though it is a genuinely good experience and another awesome addition to the Western RPG genre, but it's just not grabbing my full attention at the moment. Maybe I will get it later on in the year.

ANNE MARIE COYLE: I didn't buy it because there were just too many other games released around the same time that I wanted more. It does look promising, and I'll probably get it to see me through the dreaded summer drought.

JOHN MURRAY: Yes, I'd be a fan. But I wasn't initially. I wasn't impressed with the graphics and the story was the usual fantasy fare, and most of the characters are totally forgettable. Had to force myself to play it, but after about ten hours I was having fun levelling, completing quests, getting used to the combat, etc.



@ROCKETMINX: LOVE it! There's so many quests and it's so addictive. Plus it's nice to see such a colourful game for a change.

@CHASETHELIGHT: I thought the demo was a lot of fun and looked pretty. Seems like a good title to kill a day with.

@GAMEWANK_JIM: A pleasant, lengthy distraction from not having anything else to play at the time.

@RVVERSION1: Like *Fable* but cheaper. Todd should stick to comics.

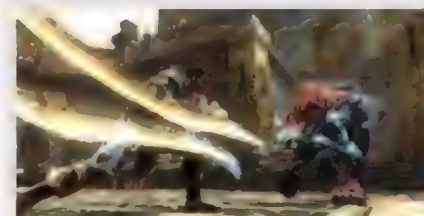
@FENIX11: The game is really awesome but too many side quests make you forget what the main story is!

@GAMESASYLUM: A good alternative for those wishing *Fable* was available on PS3.

@PAL_316: *Kingdoms Of Amalur* is very like *Fable*. I'm enjoying.

@SAMUELWROBERTS: It's like *Baby's First Skyrim*. In the best possible way.

@HANKBIZZLE: I bought it but haven't played it yet! Loved the demo, that's why I bought it.



Post-Mortem

■ Every single one of us has a 'we will get this one day!' list in the back of our mind. Then we're browsing the sales or rifling through second-hand games and that list goes hazy, and we can't remember what was ever on it.

Kingdoms Of Amalur was perhaps always destined to be on that list. Released a month before *Mass Effect 3* meant those hankering after an RPG waited for that. Released four months after *Skyrim* meant RPG itches were still being scratched by epic adventures in Tamriel. If you're going to release a Western RPG, timing it between the two biggest releases ever seen in the genre probably isn't ideal. But then we don't work in marketing and we've never worn a suit, so what do we know, eh?

The good news is that some people did take a gamble on it and most seem to have enjoyed it. The size and sheer number of side quests is what most pleased people if the Twitter and Facebook feedback is anything to go by.

It's also worth noting that EA's aggressive Online Pass initiative, which extended to *Kingdoms Of Amalur*'s single-player, doesn't appear to have helped sales for the title. It's a bargain bin game, despite its healthy review score. Shame.



The Voice Of PlayStation
Gaming For Over A Decade



Next Month

次の定期刊行物

ON SALE
5 JULY



WORLD EXCLUSIVE

PlayStation 4

What the big studios are demanding from the next leap in gaming

ALSO NEXT ISSUE

DEAD SPACE 3

Big changes coming for
EA's monster sequel

CRYSIS 3

All the technical secrets and
info straight from Crytek

THE LAST OF US

Why it's the game that will shock
every PlayStation 3 owner

Issue 220 includes

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PS3 DVD

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KONAMI

SILENT HILL DOWNPOUR

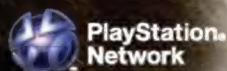
DISCOVER A BRAND
NEW HORROR
WITH SILENT HILL
DOWNPOUR

SILENT HILL HD COLLECTION

RELIVE TWO CLASSIC GAMES IN THE
SERIES, REMASTERED IN TERRIFYING HD.



PS3
PlayStation 3



XBOX 360

XBOX
LIVE

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KONAMI



A HIDEO KOJIMA GAME

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

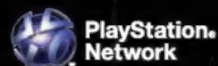
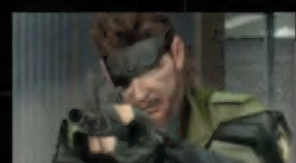
HD COLLECTION

FEATURING THREE METAL GEAR SOLID GAMES

METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER

METAL GEAR SOLID 2
SONS OF LIBERTY

METAL GEAR SOLID
PEACE WALKER



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